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THE

CABINET CYCLOPÆDIA.

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LIVES

OF

EMINENT

BRITISH STATESMEN.

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1831.

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THE

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CONDUCTED BY THE

REV. DIONYSIUS LARDNER, LL.D. F.R.S. L.&E.

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EMINENT LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC MEN.

Biography.

EMINENT BRITISH STATESMEN.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The present volume commences a Biographical series, which will include the lives of the most considerable persons who have appeared in the political history of these countries, from the reign of Henry the Eighth inclusive to the present time. The chronological order will be generally observed, and the Memoirs will vary in length, according to the varying interest and importance of the subjects, and the extent of the materials which may be found accessible.

The literary contributors being persons who cannot be dictated to, nor required to modify the expression of their opinions, so as to adapt them to the views of others, the Editor will not hold himself responsible for the various political and literary opinions which may be found in this series. Still less will the author of any one life be answerable for the doctrines or opinions advanced by the author of another.

Under such circumstances, the reader will not be surprised if contemporary lives occasionally present conflicting opinions. The Editor, however, feels

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confident that these different views will be such only as men of equally liberal principles may honestly and consistently entertain.

As the Life of sir Thomas More contains observations which have personal reference to its author, it may be right to state here that it is the production of sir James Mackintosh.

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LIVES

OF

EMINENT BRITISH STATESMEN.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

1480—1535.

Aristotle and Bacon, the greatest philosophers of the ancient and modern world, agree in representing poetry as being of a more excellent nature than history. Agreeably to the predominance of mere understanding in Aristotle's mind, he alleges as his cause of preference that poetry regards general truth, or conformity to universal nature; while history is conversant only with a confined and accidental truth, dependent on time, place, and circumstance. The ground assigned by Bacon is such as naturally issued from that fusion of imagination with reason, which constitutes his philosophical genius. Poetry is ranked more highly by him, because the poet presents us with a pure excellence and an unmingled grandeur, not to be found in the coarse realities of life or of history; but which the mind of man, although not destined to reach, is framed to contemplate with delight.

The general difference between biography and history is obvious. There have been many men in every age whose lives are full of interest and instruction, but who, having never taken a part in public affairs, are altogether excluded from the province of the historian. There

have been also, probably, equal numbers who have influenced the fortune of nations in peace or in war, of the peculiarities of whose character we have no information; and who, for the purposes of the biographer, may be said to have no private life.

These are extreme cases. But there are other men, whose manners and acts are equally well known, whose individual lives are deeply interesting, whose characteristic qualities are peculiarly striking, who have taken an important share in events connected with the most extraordinary revolutions of human affairs, and whose biography becomes more difficult from that combination and intermixture of private with public occurrences, which render it instructive and interesting. The variety and splendour of the lives of such men render it often difficult to distinguish the portion of them which ought to be admitted into history, from that which should be reserved for biography. Generally speaking, these two parts are so distinct and unlike, that they cannot be confounded without much injury to both;—either when the biographer hides the portrait of the individual by a crowded and confined picture of events, or when the historian allows unconnected narratives of the lives of men to break the thread of history. The historian contemplates only the surface of human nature, adorned and disguised when the actors perform brilliant parts before a great audience, in the midst of so many dazzling circumstances, that it is hard to estimate their intrinsic worth; and impossible, in a historical relation, to exhibit the secret springs of their conduct. The biographer endeavours to follow the hero and the statesman, from the field, the council, or the senate, to his private dwelling, where, in the midst of domestic ease, or of social pleasure, he throws aside the robe and the mask, becomes again a man instead of an actor, and, in spite of himself, often betrays those frailties and singularities which are visible in the countenance and voice, the gesture and manner, of every man when he is not acting a part. It is particularly difficult to observe

the distinction in the case of sir Thomas More, because he was so perfectly natural a man that he carried his amiable peculiarities into the gravest deliberations of state and the most solemn acts of law. Perhaps nothing more can be universally laid down, than that the biographer never ought to introduce public events, except as far as they are absolutely necessary to the illustration of character, and that the historian should rarely digress into biographical particulars, except as far as they contribute to the clearness of his narrative of political occurrences.

Sir Thomas More was born in Milk Street, in the city of London, in the year 1480, three years before the death of Edward IV. His family was respectable, —no mean advantage at that time. His father, sir John More, who was born about 1440, was entitled by his descent to use an armorial bearing, — a privilege guarded strictly and jealously as the badge of those who then began to be called gentry, who, though separated from the lords of parliament by political rights, yet formed with them in the order of society one body, corresponding to those called noble in the other countries of Europe. Though the political power of the barons was on the wane, the social position of the united body of nobility and gentry retained its dignity.* Sir John More was one of the justices of the court of King's Bench to the end of his long life; and, according to his son's account, well performed the peaceable duties of civil life, being gentle in his deportment, blameless, meek and merciful, an equitable judge, and an upright man.†

* "In sir T. More's epitaph, he describes himself as 'born of no noble family, but of an honest stock,' (or in the words of the original, familiâ non celebri, sed honestâ natus,) a true translation, as we here take *nobility* and *noble*; for none under a baron, except he be of the privy council, doth challenge it; and in this sense he meant it; but as the Latin word *nobilis* is taken in other countries for gentrie, it was otherwise. Sir John More bare arms from his birth; and though we cannot certainly tell who were his ancestors, they must needs be gentlemen." — *Life of T. More, by T. More, his great grandson*, pp. 3, 4.

† "Homo civilis, innocens, mitis, integer." — *Sir Thomas More's Epitaph.*

Sir Thomas More received the first rudiments of his education at St. Anthony's school, in Threadneedle Street, under Nicholas Hart; for the daybreak of letters was now so bright, that the reputation of schools was carefully noted, and schoolmasters began to be held in some part of the estimation which they merit. Here, however, his studies were confined to Latin; the cultivation of Greek, which contains the sources and models of Roman literature, being yet far from having sunk to the level of the best among the schools. It was the custom of that age that young gentlemen should pass part of their boyhood in the house and service of their superiors, where they might profit by listening to the conversation of men of experience, and gradually acquire the manners of the world. It was not deemed derogatory from youths of rank; it was rather thought a beneficial expedient for inuring them to stern discipline and implicit obedience, that they should be trained, during this noviciate, in humble and even menial offices. A young gentleman thought himself no more lowered by serving as a page in the family of a great peer or prelate, than a Courtenay or a Howard considered it as a degradation to be the huntsman or the cupbearer of a Tudor.

More was fortunate in the character of his master. When his school studies were thought to be finished, about his fifteenth year, he was placed in the house of cardinal Morton, archbishop of Canterbury. This prelate, who was born in 1410, was originally an eminent civilian, canonist, and a practiser of note in the ecclesiastical courts. He was a Lancastrian, and the fidelity with which he adhered to Henry VI., till that unfortunate prince's death, recommended him to the confidence and patronage of Edward IV. He negotiated the marriage with the princess Elizabeth, which reconciled (with whatever confusion of titles) the pretensions of York and Lancaster, and raised Henry Tudor to the throne. By these services, and by his long experience in affairs, he continued to be prime minister till his

death, which happened in 1500, at the advanced age of ninety.* Even at the time of More's entry into his household, the old cardinal, though then fourscore and five years, was pleased with the extraordinary promise of the sharp and lively boy; as aged persons sometimes, as it were, catch a glimpse of the pleasure of youth, by entering for a moment into its feelings. More broke into the rude dramas performed at the cardinal's Christmas festivities, to which he was too young to be invited, and often invented at the moment speeches for himself, "which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside." The cardinal, much delighting in his wit and towardness, would often say of him unto the nobles that divers times dined with him,—"This child here waiting at the table, whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man." † More, in his historical work, commemorates this early friend, not without a sidelong glance at the acts of a courtier. "He was a man of great natural wit, very well learned, honourable in behaviour, lacking in no wise to win favour." ‡ In "Utopia" he praises the cardinal more lavishly, and with no restraint from the severe justice of history. In Morton's house he was probably first known to Colet, dean of St. Paul's, the founder of St. Paul's school, and one of the most eminent restorers of ancient literature in England; who was wont to say, that "there was but one wit in England, and that was young Thomas More." §

More went to Oxford in 1497, where he appears to have had apartments in St. Mary's hall, but to have carried on his studies at Canterbury college ||, where Wolsey afterwards reared the magnificent edifice of Christchurch. At that university he founded a sort of civil war, waged between the partisans of Greek literature, who were then innovators in education, suspected

* Dod's Church History, i. 141. The Roman Catholics, now restored to their just rank in society, have no longer an excuse for not continuing this useful work.—*Godwin's Catalogue of Bishops*, 161. 277. edit. 1615.

† Singer's Roper, 4.

‡ More, Hist. Rich. III. § More's Life of More, p. 25.

|| Wood's Ath. Oxon. Hearne's Roper.

of heresy, if not of infidelity, on the one hand; and on the other side the larger body, comprehending the aged, the powerful, and the celebrated, who were content to be no wiser than their forefathers. The younger followers of the latter faction affected the ridiculous denomination of Trojans, and assumed the names of Priam, Hector, Paris, and Æneas, to denote their hostility to the Greeks. The puerile pedantry of these coxcombs had the good effect of awakening the zeal of More for his Grecian masters, and of inducing him to withstand the barbarism which would exclude the noblest productions of the human mind from the education of English youth. He expostulated with the university in a letter addressed to the whole body, reproaching them with the better example of Cambridge, where the gates were thrown open to the higher classics of Greece, as freely as to their Roman imitators.* The established clergy even then, though Luther had not yet alarmed them, strangers as they were to the new learning, affected to contemn that of which they were ignorant, and could not endure the prospect of a rising generation more learned than themselves. Their whole education was Latin, and their instruction was limited to Roman and canon law, to theology, and school philosophy. They dreaded the downfall of the authority of the vulgate from the study of Greek and Hebrew. But the course of things was irresistible. The scholastic system was now on the verge of general disregard, and the perusal of the greatest Roman writers turned all eyes towards the Grecian masters. What man of high capacity, and of ambition becoming his faculties, could read Cicero without a desire to comprehend Demosthenes and Plato? What youth desirous of excellence but would rise from the study of the Georgics and the Æneid, with a wish to be acquainted with Hesiod and Apollonius, with Pindar, and above all with Homer? These studies were then pursued, not with the dull languor and cold formality with

* See this first Letter in the Appendix to the second volume of Jortin's Life of Erasmus.

which the indolent, incapable, incurious majority of boys obey the prescribed rules of an old establishment, but with the enthusiastic admiration with which the superior few feel an earnest of their own higher powers, in the delight which arises in their minds at the contemplation of new beauty, and of excellence unimagined before.

More found several of the restorers of Grecian literature at Oxford, who had been the scholars of the exiled Greeks in Italy: Grocyn, the first professor of Greek in the university; Linacre, the accomplished founder of the college of physicians; and William Latimer, of whom we know little more than what we collect from the general testimony borne by his most eminent contemporaries to his learning and virtue. Grocyn, the first of the English restorers, was a late learner, being in the forty-eighth year of his age when he went, in 1488, to Italy, where the fountains of ancient learning were once more opened. After having studied under Politian, and learnt Greek from Chalcondylas, one of the lettered emigrants who educated the teachers of the western nations, he returned to Oxford, where he taught that language to More, to Linacre, and to Erasmus. Linacre followed the example of Grocyn in visiting Italy, and profiting by the instructions of Chalcondylas. Colet spent four years in the same country, and in the like studies. William Latimer repaired at a mature age to Padua, in quest of that knowledge which was not to be acquired at home. He was afterwards chosen to be tutor to Reginald Pole, the king's cousin; and Erasmus, by attributing to him "maidenly modesty," leaves in one word an agreeable impression of the character of a man chosen for his scholarship to be Linacre's colleague in a projected translation of Aristotle, and solicited by the latter for aid in his edition of the New Testament.*

More, at that university, became known to a man far more extraordinary than any of these scholars. Erasmus

* For Latimer, Dod. i. 219. For Grocyn, Ib. 227. Colet and Linacre, all biographical compilations.

was invited to England by lord Mountjoy, who had been his pupil at Paris, and continued to be his friend during life. He resided at Oxford during a great part of 1497; and having returned to Paris in 1498, spent the former portion of the same year at the university of Oxford, where he again had an opportunity of pouring his zeal for Greek study into the mind of More. Their friendship, though formed at an age of considerable disparity, — Erasmus being then thirty and More only seventeen, — lasted throughout the whole of their lives. Erasmus had acquired only the rudiments of Greek at the age most suited to the acquisition of languages, and was now completing his knowledge on that subject at a period of mature manhood, which he jestingly compares with the age at which the elder Cato commenced his Grecian studies.* Though Erasmus himself seems to have been much excited towards Greek learning by the example of the English scholars, yet the cultivation of classical literature was then so small a part of the employment or amusement of life, that William Latimer, one of the most eminent of these scholars, to whom Erasmus applied for aid in his edition of the Greek Testament, declared that he had not read a page of Greek or Latin for nine years†, that he had almost forgotten his ancient literature, and that Greek books were scarcely procurable in England. Sir John More, inflexibly adhering to the old education, and dreading that the allurements of literature might seduce his son from law, discouraged the pursuit of Greek, and at the same time reduced the allowance of Thomas to the level of the most frugal life; a parsimony for which the son was afterwards, though not then, thankful, as having taught him good husbandry, and preserved him from dissipation.

* "Delibavimus et *olim* has literas sed summis duntaxat labris, at *nuper* paulo altius ingressi, videmus id quod sæpe numero apud gravissimos auctores legimus, — *Latinam eruditionem extra Græcismum mancam esse et dimidiatam.* Apud nos enim rivuli vix quidam sunt, et lacunulæ lutulentæ, apud illos fontes purissimi et flumina aurum volventia."—*Erasm. Epist.* 75. *Op.* iii. p. 63. Lug. Bat. 1703.

† Guliel. Latimer Epist. Erasmo. Erasm. Op. iii. p. 293.

At the university, or soon after leaving it, young More composed the greater part of his English verses; which are not such as, from their intrinsic merit, in a more advanced state of our language and literature, would be deserving of particular attention. But as the poems of a contemporary of Skelton, they may merit more consideration. Our language was still neglected, or confined chiefly to the vulgar uses of life. Its force, its compass, and its capacity of harmony, were untried: for though Chaucer had shone brightly for a season, the century which followed was dark and wintry. No master genius had impregnated the nation with poetical sensibility. In these inauspicious circumstances, the composition of poems, especially if they manifest a sense of harmony, and some adaptation of the sound to the subject, indicates a delight in poetry, and a proneness to that beautiful art, which in such an age is a more than ordinary token of a capacity for it. The experience of all ages, however it may be accounted for, shows that the mind, when melted into tenderness, or exalted by the contemplation of grandeur, vents its feelings in language suited to a state of excitement, and delights in distinguishing its diction from common speech by some species of measure and modulation, which combines the gratification of the ear with that of the fancy and the heart. The secret connection between a poetical ear and a poetical soul is touched by the most sublime of poets, who consoled himself in his blindness by the remembrance of those who, under the like calamity,

> —— Feed on thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers.

We may be excused for throwing a glance over the compositions of a writer, who is represented a century after his death, by Ben Jonson, as one of the models of English literature. More's poem on the death of Elizabeth, the wife of Henry VII., and his merry jest how a serjeant would play the friar, may be considered as fair samples of his pensive and sportive vein. The superiority of the latter shows his natural disposition to pleasantry.

There is a sort of dancing mirth in the metre, which seems to warrant the observation above hazarded, that in a rude period the structure of verse may be regarded as some presumption of a genius for poetry. In a refined age, indeed, all the circumstances are different. The frame of metrical composition is known to all the world. It may be taught by rule, and acquired mechanically. The greatest facility of versification may exist without a spark of genius. Even then, however, the secrets of the art of versification are chiefly revealed to a chosen few by their poetical sensibility; so that sufficient remains of the original tie still continue to attest the primitive union. It is remarkable, that the most poetical of his poems is written in Latin. It is a poem addressed to a lady, with whom he had been in love when he was sixteen years old, and she fourteen; it turns chiefly on the pleasing reflexion that his affectionate remembrance restored to her the beauty, of which twenty-five years seemed to others to have robbed her.*

When More had completed his time at Oxford, he applied himself to the law, which was to be the occupation of his life. He first studied at New Inn, and afterwards at Lincoln's Inn.† The societies of lawyers having purchased some *inns*, or noblemen's residences, in London, were hence called inns of court. It was not then a metaphor to call them an university: they had professors of law; they conferred the characters of barrister and serjeant, analogous to the degrees of batchelor, master, and doctor, bestowed by universities; and every man, before he became a barrister, was subjected to examination, and obliged to defend a thesis. More was appointed reader at Furnival's Inn, where he delivered lectures for three

* "Gratulatur quod eam repererit incolumem quam olim ferme puer amaverat."—*More Poemata.*
It does not seem reconcileable with dates, that this lady could have been the younger sister of Jane Colt. Vide infrà.

† *Inn* was successively applied, like the French word *hotel*, first to the town mansion of a great man, and afterwards to a house where all mankind were entertained for money.

years. The English law had then grown into a science, formed by a process of generalisation from usages and decisions, with less help from the Roman law than the jurisprudence of any other country, though not with that total independence of it which English lawyers in former times considered as a subject of boast: it was rather formed as the law of Rome itself had been formed, than adopted from that noble system. When More began to lecture on English law, it was by no means in a disorderly and neglected state. The ecclesiastical lawyers, whose arguments and determinations were its earliest materials, were well prepared, by the logic and philosophy of their masters the schoolmen, for those exact and even subtle distinctions which the precision of the rules of jurisprudence eminently required. In the reigns of the Lancastrian princes, Littleton had reduced the law to an elementary treatise, distinguished by a clear method and an elegant conciseness. Fortescue had at that time compared the governments of England and France with the eye of a philosophical observer. Brooke and Fitzherbert had compiled digests of the law, which they called (it might be thought, from their size, ironically) Abridgments. The latter composed a treatise, still very curious, on writs; that is, on those commands (formally from the king) which constitute essential parts of every legal proceeding. Other writings on jurisprudence occupied the printing presses of London in the earliest stage * of their existence. More delivered lectures at St. Lawrence's church in the Old Jewry, on the work of St. Augustine, "De Civitate Dei," that is, on the divine government of the moral world; which must seem to readers who look at ancient times through modern habits, a very singular occupation for a young lawyer. But the clergy were the chief depositaries of knowledge, and were the sole canonists and civilians, as they had once been the only lawyers.† Religion, morals, and law, were then

* Doctor and Student by St. Germain. *Diversité des Courtes*, printed by Rastal in 1534, &c. &c.

† *Nullus causidicus nisi clericus.*

taught together without due distinction between them, to the injury and confusion of them all. To these lectures, we are told by the affectionate biographer, "there resorted doctor Grocyn, an excellent cunning man, and all the chief learned of the city of London." * More, in his lectures, however, did not so much discuss "the points of divinity as the precepts of moral philosophy and history, wherewith these books are replenished." † They, perhaps, however, embittered his polemical writings, and somewhat soured that naturally sweet temper, which was so deeply felt by his companions, that Erasmus scarcely ever concludes a letter to him without epithets more indicative of the most tender affection than of the calm feelings of friendship. ‡

The tenderness of his nature combined with the instructions and habits of his education to predispose him to piety. As he lived in the neighbourhood of the great Carthusian monastery, called the Charterhouse, for some years, he manifested a predilection for monastic life, and is said to have practised some of those austerities and self-inflictions which prevail among the gloomier and more stern orders. A pure mind in that age often sought to extinguish some of the inferior impulses of human nature, instead of employing them for their appointed purpose, — that of animating the domestic affections, and sweetening the most important duties of life. § He soon learnt, by self examination, his unfitness for the priesthood, and relinquished his project of taking orders, in words which should have warned his church against the imposition of unnatural self denial on vast multitudes and successive generations of men. ||

The same affectionate disposition which had driven him towards the visions, and, strange as it may seem, to the austerities of the monks, now sought a more natural channel. "He resorted to the house of one maister

* Roper, p. 5. Singer's edition. † More's Life of Sir T. More, p. 44.
‡ Suavissime More. Charissime More. Mellitissime More.
§ —— Founded in thee
Relations dear and all the charities, &c.
|| "Maluit maritus esse castus quam sacerdos impurus."— *Erasm. Ep. ad Ulric. ab Hutton*, 23 July, 1519. *Opp.* iii. p. 475.

Colt, a gentleman of Essex, who had often invited him thither; having three daughters, whose honest conversation and virtuous education provoked him there especially to set his affection. And albeit his mind most served him to the second daughter, for that he thought her the fairest and best favoured, yet when he considered that it would be both great grief, and some shame also, to the eldest, to see her younger sister preferred before her in marriage, he then of a certain pity framed his fancy toward her, and soon after married her, nevertheless discontinuing his study of the law at Lincoln's Inn."* His more remote descendant adds, that Mr. Colt "proffered unto him the choice of any of his daughters; and that More, out of a kind of compassion, settled his fancy on the eldest."† Erasmus gives a turn to More's marriage with Jane Colt, which is too ingenious to be probable: — "He wedded a very young girl of respectable family, but who had hitherto lived in the country with her parents and sisters; and was so uneducated, that he could mould her to his own tastes and manners. He caused her to be instructed in letters; and she became a very skilful musician, which peculiarly pleased him."‡

The plain matter of fact seems to have been, that in an age when marriage chiefly depended upon a bargain between parents, on which sons were little consulted, and daughters not at all, More, emerging at twenty-one from the toil of acquiring Greek, and the voluntary self torture of Carthusian mystics, was delighted at his first entry among pleasing young women, of whom the least attractive might, in these circumstances, have touched him; and that his slight preference for the second easily yielded to a good-natured reluctance to mortify the elder. Most young ladies in Essex, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, probably required some tuition to appear in London among scholars and courtiers, who were at that moment more mingled than it is now usual for them to be. It is impossible to ascertain the precise shade of

* Roper, p. 6. Singer's edition.
† More, p. 30.
‡ Epist. ad Ulric. ab Hutton, ut suprà.

feeling which the biographers intended to denote by the words "pity" and "compassion," for the use of which they are charged with a want of gallantry or delicacy by modern writers; although neither of these terms, when the context is at the same time read, seems unhappily employed to signify the natural refinement, which shrinks from humbling the harmless self-complacency of an innocent girl.

The marriage proved so happy, that nothing was to be regretted in it but the shortness of the union, in consequence of the early death of Jane Colt, who left a son and three daughters; of whom Margaret, the eldest, inherited the features, the form, and the genius of her father, and requited his fond partiality by a daughterly love, which endured to the end.

In no long time * after the death of Jane Colt, he married Alice Middleton, a widow, seven years older than himself, and neither handsome nor young; rather for the care of his family, and the management of his house, than as a companion and a friend. He treated her, and indeed most females except his daughter Margaret, as better qualified to relish a jest, than to take a part in more serious conversation; and in their presence gave an unbounded scope to his natural inclination towards pleasantry. He even indulged himself in a Latin jingle on her want of youth and beauty, "nec bella nec puella." † "She was of good years, of no good favour or complexion, nor very rich, and by disposition near and worldly. It was reported that he wooed her for a friend of his; but she answering that he might speed if he spoke for himself, he married her with the consent of his friend, yielding to her that which perhaps he never would have done of his own accord. Indeed, her favour could not have bewitched, or scarce moved, any man to love her; but yet she proved a kind and careful mother-in-law to his children." Erasmus, who was often an inmate in the

* "In a few months," says Erasmus, in his letter to Hutton: within two or three years, according to his great grandson. — *More's Life of More*, p. 32.

† Erasm. Epist. ad Hutt.

family, speaks of her as "a keen and watchful manager, with whom More lived on terms of as much respect and kindness as if she had been fair and young." Such is the happy power of a loving disposition, which overflows on companions, though their attractions or deserts should be slender. "No husband," continues Erasmus, "ever gained so much obedience from a wife by authority and severity, as More won by gentleness and pleasantry. Though verging on old age, and not of a yielding temper, he prevailed on her to take lessons on the lute, the cithara, the viol, the monochord, and the flute, which she daily practised to him. With the same gentleness he ruled his whole family, so that it was without broils or quarrels. He composed all differences, and never parted with any one on terms of unkindness. The house was fated to the peculiar felicity that those who dwelt in it were always raised to a higher fortune; and that no spot ever fell on the good name of its happy inhabitants." The course of More's domestic life is minutely described by eye witnesses. "His custom was daily (besides his private prayers with his children) to say the seven psalms, the litany, and the suffrages following; so was his guise with his wife, children, and household, nightly before he went to bed, to go to his chapel, and there on his knees ordinarily to say certain psalms and collects with them."* "With him, says Erasmus, "you might imagine yourself in the academy of Plato. But I should do injustice to his house by comparing it to the academy of Plato, where numbers, and geometrical figures, and sometimes moral virtues, were the subjects of discussion; it would be more just to call it a school and exercise of the Christian religion. All its inhabitants, male or female, applied their leisure to liberal studies and profitable reading, although piety was their first care. No wrangling, no angry word, was heard in it; no one was idle: every one did his duty with alacrity, and

* Roper, p. 25. Singer's edition.

not without a temperate cheerfulness." * Erasmus had not the sensibility of his friend: he was more prone to smile than to sigh at the concerns of men; but he was touched by the remembrance of these domestic solemnities in the household of his friends. He manifests an agreeable emotion at the recollection of these scenes in daily life, which tended to hallow the natural authority of parents; to bestow a sort of dignity on humble occupations; to raise menial offices to the rank of virtues; to spread peace and cultivate kindness among those who had shared, and were soon again to share, the same modest rites, in gently breathing around them a spirit of meek equality, which rather humbled the pride of the great than disquieted the spirits of the lowly. More himself justly speaks of the hourly interchange of the smaller acts of kindness which flow from the charities of domestic life, as having a claim on his time as strong as the occupations which seemed to others so much more serious and important. "While," says he, "in pleading, in hearing, in deciding causes or composing differences, in waiting on some men about business, and on others out of respect, the greatest part of the day is spent on other men's affairs, the remainder of it must be given to my family at home; so that I can reserve no part of it to myself, that is, to study. I must talk with my wife, and chat with my children, and I have somewhat to say to my servants; for all these things I reckon as a part of my business, except a man will resolve to be a stranger at home; and with whomsoever either nature, chance, or choice, has engaged a man in any commerce, he must endeavour to make himself as acceptable to those about him as he can." †

His occupations now necessarily employed a large portion of his time. His professional practice became so considerable, that about the accession of Henry VIII., in 1509, with his legal office in the city of London, it produced 400*l.* a year, probably equivalent to an annual

* Erasm. Epist. 426. Opp. iii. 1810.
† Dedication of Utopia to Peter Giles, Burnet's translation, 1684.

income of 5000*l.* in the present day. Though it be not easy to determine the exact period of the occurrences of his life, from his establishment in London to his acceptance of political office, the beginning of Henry VIII.'s reign may be considered as the time of his highest eminence at the bar. About this time a ship belonging to the pope, or claimed by his holiness on behalf of some of his subjects, happened to come to Southampton, where she was seized as a forfeiture to the king; probably as what is called a droit of the crown, or a droit of the admiralty, though in what circumstances or on what grounds we know not. The papal minister made suit to the king that the case might be argued for the pope by learned counsel in a public place, and in presence of the minister himself, who was a distinguished civilian. None was found so well qualified to be of counsel for the ambassador as More, who could report in Latin to that minister all the reasonings of the counsel on both sides. More accordingly stated all their arguments to his client, and argued so learnedly on the pope's side, that he succeeded in obtaining an order for the restitution of the vessel detained; and appears by his probity and ability to have reached the summit of his forensic reputation.* There was no case of consequence in controversy before any court of law, in which he was not of counsel for one of the parties.

It has been already intimated, that about the same time he was appointed to a judicial office in the city of London, which is described by his son-in-law as one of the under-sheriffs of the city. These officers are now annually appointed, and exercise no judicial powers. Roper, who was for many years an officer of the court of King's Bench, gives the name of the office correctly; but does not describe its nature and importance so truly as Erasmus, who tells his correspondent that More passed several years in the city of London, where he was born, as a judge in civil causes. "This office, though not laborious, for the court sits only on the forenoon of every

* Roper, p. 9.

Thursday, is accounted very honourable. No judge of that court ever went through more causes; none decided them more uprightly; often remitting the fees to which he was entitled from the suitors. His deportment in this capacity endeared him extremely to his fellow-citizens." * He was judge of the sheriff's court, which, being the county court for London and Middlesex, was, at that time, a station of honour and advantage.† For the county courts in general, and indeed all the ancient subordinate jurisdictions of the common law, had not yet been superseded by that concentration of authority in the hands of the superior courts at Westminster, which contributed to the purity and dignity of the judicial character, as well as to a perfect uniformity and a constant improvement of the administration of law; a great commendation, it is true, but to which we cannot add that it served in the same degree to promote a speedy and cheap redress of the wrongs suffered by those suitors to whom cost and delay are most grievous. More's office, in that state of jurisdiction, might therefore have possessed the importance which his contemporaries ascribed to it; although the denomination of it would not make such an impression on modern ears.

From communications obtained for me from the records of the city, I am enabled to ascertain some particulars of the nature of More's appointment, which have occasioned a difference of opinion. He was under-sheriff of London; for, on the 8th of May, 1514, it was agreed by the common council, "that Thomas More, gentleman, one of the under-sheriffs of London, should occupy his office and chamber by a sufficient deputy, during his absence as the king's ambassador in Flanders." It appears from several entries in the same records, from 1496 to 1502 inclusive, that the under-sheriff‡ was annually elected, or rather confirmed; for the practice

* Erasm. Ep. ad Ulric. Hutt.

† "In urbe suâ pro shyrevo dixit." These are the words of an inscription intended by More himself on his family monument, and sent to Erasmus, 15th June, 1532.—*Erasm. Opp.* iii. 1441.

‡ The Latin term for under-sheriff in the entries is *subvicecomes;* but the leave of absence during the Flemish mission is in English.

was not to remove him without his own application or some serious fault. For six years of Henry's reign, Edward Dudley was one of the under-sheriffs; a circumstance which renders the superior importance of the office at that time probable. Thomas Marowe, the author of works on law esteemed in his time, though not published, appears in the above records as under-sheriff.

It is apparent, that either as a considerable source of his income, or as an honourable token of public confidence, this office was valued by More; since he informs Erasmus, in 1516, that he had declined a handsome pension offered to him by the king on his return from Flanders: that he believed he should always decline it; because either it would oblige him to resign his office in the city, which he preferred to a better, or if he retained it, in case of a controversy of the city with the king for their privileges, he might be deemed by his fellow-citizens to be disabled by dependence on the crown from sincerely and faithfully maintaining their rights.* This last reasoning is also interesting, as the first intimation of the necessity of a city law-officer being independent on the crown, and of the legal resistance of the corporation of London to a Tudor king. It paved the way for those happier times in which the great city had the honour to number the Holts and the Denmans among her legal advisers.

He is the first person in our history distinguished by the faculty of public speaking, and remarkable for the successful employment of it in parliament against a lavish grant of money to the crown. The circumstances of a fact thus doubly memorable are related by his son-in-law as follows: — "In the latter time of king Henry VII. he was made a burgess of the parliament, wherein was demanded by the king about three fifteenths for the marriage of his eldest daughter, that then should be the Scottish queen. At the last debating whereof he made such arguments and reasons there against, that the king's demands were thereby clean overthrown; so that one of

* Thomas Morus Erasmo. 1516. Ep. 227. Erasmi Opp. iii. 220.

the king's privy chamber, named maister Tyler, being present thereat, brought word to the king out of the parliament house, that a beardless boy had disappointed all his purpose. Whereupon the king, conceiving great indignation towards him, could not be satisfied until he had some way revenged it. And forasmuch as he, nothing having, could nothing lose, his grace devised a causeless quarrel against his father; keeping him in the Tower till he had made him to pay 100*l.* fine," (probably on a charge of having infringed some obsolete penal law). "Shortly after, it fortuned that sir T. More, coming in a suit to Dr. Fox, bishop of Winchester, one of the king's privy council, the bishop called him aside, and, pretending great favour towards him, promised that if he would be ruled by him he would not fail into the king's favour again to restore him; meaning, as it was afterwards conjectured, to cause him thereby to confess his offences against the king, whereby his highness might, with the better colour, have occasion to revenge his displeasure against him. But when he came from the bishop he fell into communication with one maister Whitforde, his familiar friend, then chaplain to that bishop, and showed him what the bishop had said, praying for his advice. Whitforde prayed him by the passion of God not to follow the counsel; for my lord, to serve the king's turn, will not stick to agree to his own father's death. So sir Thomas More returned to the bishop no more; and had not the king died soon after, he was determined to have gone over sea."* That the advice of Whitford was wise, appeared from a circumstance which occurred nearly ten years after, which exhibits a new feature in the character of the king and of his bishops. When Dudley was sacrificed to popular resentment, under Henry VIII., and when he was on his way to execution, he met sir Thomas, to whom he said,—"Oh More, More! God was your good friend,

* Roper, p. 7. There seems to be some forgetfulness of dates in the latter part of this passage, which has been copied by succeeding writers. Margaret, it is well known, was married in 1503. The debate was not, therefore, later than that year. But Henry VII. lived till 1509.

that you did not ask the king forgiveness, as manie would have had you do; for if you had done so, *perhaps you should have been in the like case with us now.*"*

It was natural that the restorer of political eloquence, which had slumbered for a long series of ages †, should also be the earliest of the parliamentary champions of liberty. But it is lamentable that we have so little information respecting sir Thomas More's oratory, which alone could have armed him for the noble conflict. He may be said to hold the same station among us, which is assigned by Cicero, in his dialogue on the celebrated orators of Rome‡, to Cato the censor, whose consulship was only about ninety years prior to the consulship of Cicero himself. That celebrated Roman had, indeed, made an animated speech in the eighty-fifth year of his age, which was the last of his life. A hundred and fifty of his speeches were extant in the time of Cicero. "But," says the latter, "what living or lately deceased orator has read them? Who knows them at all?"

Sir Thomas More's answer, as speaker of the house of commons, to Wolsey, of which more will be said presently, is admirable for its promptitude, quickness, seasonableness, and caution, combined with dignity and spirit. It unites presence of mind and adaptation to the person and circumstances, with address and management seldom surpassed. If the tone be more submissive than suits modern ears, it is yet remarkable for that ingenious refinement which for an instant shows a glimpse of the sword generally hidden under robes of state. "His eloquent tongue," says Erasmus, "so well seconds his fertile invention, that no one speaks better when suddenly called forth. His attention never languishes; his mind is always before his words; his memory has all its stock so turned into ready money, that, without hesitation or delay, it gives out whatever the time and the case may require. His acuteness in dispute is unrivalled,

* More's Life of More, p. 38.

† "Postquam pugnatum est apud *Actium*, magna illa ingenia cessere. —*Tacitus.*

‡ Brutus, sive de Claris Oratoribus.

and he often perplexes the most renowned theologians when he enters their province."* Though much of this encomium may be applicable rather to private conversation than to public debate; and though his presence of mind may refer most to promptitude of repartee, and comparatively little to that readiness of reply, of which his experience must have been limited; it is still obvious that the great critic has ascribed to his friend the higher part of those mental qualities, which, when justly balanced and perfectly trained, constitute a great orator.

As if it had been the lot of More to open all the paths through the wilds of our old English speech, he is to be considered as our earliest prose writer, and as the first Englishman who wrote the history of his country in its present language. The historical fragment commands belief by simplicity, and by abstinence from too confident affirmation. It betrays some negligence about minute particulars, which is not displeasing as a symptom of the absence of eagerness to enforce a narrative. The composition has an ease and a rotundity, which gratify the ear without awakening the suspicion of art, of which there was no model in any preceding writer of English prose.

In comparing the prose of More with the modern style, we must distinguish the words from the composition. A very small part of his vocabulary has been superannuated. The number of terms which require any explanation is inconsiderable; and in that respect the stability of the language is remarkable. He is, indeed, in his words, more English than the great writers of a century after him, who loaded their native tongue with expressions of Greek or Latin derivation. Cicero, speaking of old Cato, seems almost to describe More. "His style is rather antiquated; he has some words displeasing to our ears, but which were then in familiar use. Change those terms, which he could not, you will then prefer no speaker to Cato."†

* Erasm. Epist. ad Ulric. ab Hutton.
† Brutus, c. 68.

But in the combination and arrangement of words, in ordinary phraseology and common habits of composition, he differs more widely from the style prevalent among us for nearly two centuries. His diction seems a continued experiment to discover the forms into which the language naturally runs. In that attempt he has frequently failed. Fortunate accident, or more varied experiment in aftertimes, led to the adoption of other combinations, which could scarcely have succeeded, if they had not been more consonant to the spirit of the language, and more agreeable to the ear and the feelings of the people. The structure of his sentences is frequently not that which the English language has finally adopted. The language of his countrymen has decided, without appeal, against the composition of the father of English prose.

The speeches contained in his fragment, like many of those in the ancient historians, were probably as real as he could render them in substance; but brightened by ornament, and improved in composition. It could, indeed, scarcely be otherwise; for the history was written in 1513*, and the death of Edward IV., with which it opens, occurred in 1483; and cardinal Morton, who became prime minister two years after that event, appears to have taken young More into his household about the year 1493. There is little scope, in so short a time, for much falsification, by tradition, of the arguments and topics really employed.

The speeches have the merit of being accommodated to the circumstances, and of disposing those to whom they were addressed to promote the object of the speaker. Strange as it may seem, this rare merit renders it probable that More had been taught, by the practice of speaking in contests where objects the most important are

* Holinshed, iii. 360. Holinshed called More's work "unfinished." That it was meant to extend to the death of Richard III. seems probable from the following sentence: — "But, forasmuch as this duke's (the duke of Gloucester) demeanour ministereth in effect all the whole matter whereof this book shall entreat, it is therefore convenient to show you, as we farther go, what manner of man this was that could find in his heart such mischief to conceive."—*Ib.* 361.

the prize of the victor, that eloquence is the art of persuasion; and that the end of the orator is not the display of his talents, but dominion over the minds of his hearers. The dying speech, in which Edward exhorts the two parties of his friends to harmony, is a grave appeal to their prudence, as well as an affecting address from a father and a king to their public feelings. The surmises thrown out by Richard against the Widvilles are short, dark, and well adapted to awaken suspicion and alarm. The insinuations against the queen, and the threats of danger to the lords themselves from leaving the person of the duke of York in the hands of that princess, in Richard's speech to the privy council, before the archbishop of York was sent to Westminster to demand the surrender of the boy, are admirable specimens of the address and art of crafty ambition. Generally speaking, the speeches have little of the vague commonplace of rhetoricians and declaimers. They are calculated for the very persons to whom they were spoken, and fitted for all their peculiarities of interest and temper. Time is not wasted in parade. In the case, indeed, of the dispute between the archbishop and the queen, about taking the duke of York out of his mother's care, in sanctuary at Westminster, there is more ingenious argument than the scene allows; and the mind rejects logical refinements, of which the use, on such an occasion, is quite irreconcileable to dramatic verisimilitude. The duke of Buckingham alleged in council, that sanctuary could be claimed only against danger; and that the royal infant had neither wisdom to desire sanctuary, nor the malicious intention in his acts without which he could not require it. To this notable paradox, which amounted to an affirmation that no certainly innocent person could ever claim protection from a sanctuary, when it was carried to the queen, she answered readily, that if she could be in sanctuary, it followed that her child, who was her ward, was included in her protection, as much as her servants were, without contradiction, allowed to be.

The Latin epigrams of More, a small volume which it required two years to carry through the press at Basil, are mostly translations from the Anthologia, which were rather made known to Europe by the fame of the writer, than calculated to increase it. They contain, however, some decisive proofs that he always entertained the opinions respecting the dependence of all government on the consent of the people, to which he professed his adherence almost in his dying moments. Latin versification was not in that early period successfully attempted in any transalpine country. The rules of prosody, or at least the laws of metrical composition, were not yet sufficiently studied for such attempts. His Latinity was of the same school with that of his friend Erasmus; which was, indeed, common to the first generation of scholars after the revival of classical study. Finding Latin a sort of general language employed by men of letters in their conversation and correspondence, they continued the use of it in the mixed and corrupted state to which such an application had necessarily reduced it: they began, indeed, to purify it from some grosser corruptions; but they built their style upon the foundation of this colloquial dialect, with no rigorous observation of the good usage of the Roman language. Writings of business, of pleasantry, of familiar intercourse, could never have been composed in pure Latinity, which was still more inconsistent with new manners, institutions, and opinions, and with discoveries and inventions added to those which were transmitted by antiquity. Erasmus, who is the master and model of this system of composition, admirably shows how much had been gained by loosening the fetters of a dead speech, and acquiring in its stead the nature, ease, variety, and vivacity of a spoken and living tongue. The course of circumstances, however, determined that this language should not subsist, or at least flourish, for much more than a century. It was assailed on one side by the purely classical, whom Erasmus, in derision, calls "Ciceronians;" and when it was sufficiently emasculated by dread of their

censure, it was finally overwhelmed by the rise of a national literature in every European language.

More exemplified the abundance and flexibility of the Erasmian Latinity in Utopia, with which this short view of all his writings, except those of controversy, may be fitly concluded. The idea of the work was suggested by some of the dialogues of Plato, who speaks of vast territories, formerly cultivated and peopled, but afterwards, by some convulsion of nature, covered by the Atlantic Ocean. These Egyptian traditions, or legends, harmonised admirably with that discovery of a new continent by Columbus, which had roused the admiration of Europe about twenty years before the composition of Utopia. This was the name of an island feigned to have been discovered by a supposed companion of Amerigo Vespucci, who is made to tell the wondrous tale of its condition to More, at Antwerp, in 1514.

More, imitating the ancients, only as a philosopher, borrowed from Plato the conception of an imaginary commonwealth, of which he placed the seat in Utopia. All the names which he invented for men or places * were intimations of their being unreal, and were, perhaps, by treating with raillery his own notions, intended to silence gainsayers. The first book, which is preliminary, is naturally and ingeniously opened by a conversation, in which Raphael Hythloday, the Utopian traveller, describes his visit to England; where, as much as in other countries, he found all proposals for improvement encountered by the remark, that "Such things pleased our ancestors, and it were well for us if we could but match them; as if it were a great mischief that any

* The following specimen of Utopian etymologies may amuse some readers: —

Utopia	*ουτοπος*	nowhere.
Achorians	*α-χωρη*	of no country.
Ademians	*α-δημος*	of no people.
Anyder (a river)	*α-υδωρ*	waterless. } The invisible city is on
Amaurot (a city)	*α-μαυρος*	dark. } the river waterless.
Hythloday	*δαιμ-υθλος*	a learner of trifles, &c.

Some are intentionally unmeaning, and others are taken from little known language in order to perplex pedants. Joseph Scaliger represents Utopia as a word not formed according to the analogy which regulates the formation of Greek words.—*Epist. Ger. Jac. Voss.* 340. Amstel. 1699.

should be found wiser than his ancestors." * "I met these proud, morose, and absurd judgments, particularly once when dining with cardinal Morton at London." After describing that portion of More's boyhood in a manner which was sure to win his heart, Raphael proceeds to say, "that there happened to be at table an English lawyer, who run out into high commendation of the severe execution of justice upon thieves, who were then hanged so fast that there were sometimes twenty hanging upon one gibbet; and added, 'that he could not wonder enough how it came to pass that there were so many thieves left robbing in all places.'" Raphael answered, "that it was because the punishment of death was neither just in itself, nor good for the public; for as the severity was too great, so the remedy was not effectual.† You, as well as other nations, like bad schoolmasters, chastise their scholars because they have not the skill to teach them." Raphael afterwards more specially ascribed the gangs of banditti who, after the suppression of Perkin Warbeck's Cornish revolt, infested England, to two causes; of which the first was the frequent disbanding of the idle and armed retainers of the nobles, who, when from necessity let loose from their masters, were too proud for industry, and had no resource but rapine; and the second was the conversion of much corn field into pasture for sheep, because the latter had become more profitable; by which base motives many landholders were tempted to expel their tenants and destroy the food of man. Raphael suggested the substitution of hard labour for death; for which he quoted the example of the Romans, and of an imaginary community in Persia. "The lawyer answered, 'that it could never be so settled in England, without endangering the whole nation by it:' he shook his head, and made some grimaces, and then held his peace, and all the company seemed to be of his mind. But the cardinal said, 'It is not easy to say whether this plan would succeed or not, since no trial has been made of it; but it might be

* Burnet's Translation of Utopia, p. 13. † Ibid. book i.

tried on thieves condemned to death, and adopted if found to answer: and vagabonds might be treated in the same way.' When the cardinal had said this, they all fell to commend the motion, though they had despised it when it came from me. They more particularly commended that concerning the vagabonds, because it had been added by him."

From some part of the above extracts it is apparent that More, instead of having anticipated the economical doctrines of Adam Smith, as some modern writers have fancied, was thoroughly imbued with the prejudices of his contemporaries against the inclosure of commons, and the extension of pasture. It is, however, observable, that he is perfectly consistent with himself, and follows his principles through all their legitimate consequences, though they may end in doctrines of very startling sound. Considering separate property as always productive of unequal distribution of the fruits of labour, and regarding that inequality of fortune as the source of bodily suffering to those who labour, and of mental depravation to those who are not compelled to toil for subsistence, Hythloday is made to say, that "as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, he cannot expect that a nation can be governed either justly or happily."* More himself objects to Hythloday: "It seems to me that men cannot live conveniently where all things are common. How can there be any plenty where every man will excuse himself from labouring? for, as the hope of gain doth not excite him, so the confidence that he has in other men's industry may make him slothful. And if people come to be pinched with want, and yet cannot dispose of any thing as their own, what can follow but perpetual sedition and bloodshed; especially when the reverence and authority due to magistrates fall to the ground: for I cannot imagine how they can be kept up among those that are in all things equal to one another." These

* Utopia, 57. Happening to write where I have no access to the original, I use Burnet's Translation. There can be no doubt of Burnet's learning or fidelity.

remarks do in reality contain the germs of unanswerable objections to all those projects of a community of goods, which suppose the moral character of the majority of mankind to continue, at the moment of their adoption, such as it has been heretofore in the most favourable instances. If, indeed, it be proposed only on the supposition, that by the influence of laws, or by the agency of any other cause, mankind in general are rendered more honest, more benevolent, more disinterested than they have hitherto been, it is evident that they will, in the same proportion, approach to a practice more near the principle of an equality and a community of all advantages. The hints of an answer to Plato, thrown out by More, are so decisive that it is not easy to see how he left this speck on his romance, unless we may be allowed to suspect that the speculation was in part suggested as a convenient cover for that biting satire on the sordid and rapacious government of Henry VII. which occupies a considerable portion of Hythloday's first discourse. It may also be supposed that More, not anxious to save visionary reformers from a few light blows in an attack aimed at corrupt and tyrannical statesmen, thinks it suitable to his imaginary personage, and conducive to the liveliness of his fiction, to represent the traveller in Utopia as touched by one of the most alluring and delusive of political chimeras.

In Utopia, farm-houses were built over the whole country, to which inhabitants were sent in rotation from the fifty-four cities. Every family had forty men and women, besides two slaves; a master and mistress preside over every family, and over thirty families a magistrate. Every year twenty of the family return to town, being two years in the country; so that all acquire some knowledge of agriculture, and the land is never left in the hands of persons quite unacquainted with country labours. When they want any thing in the country which it doth not produce, they fetch it from the city without carrying any thing in exchange. The magistrates take care to see it given to them. The people of

the towns carry their commodities to the market place, where they are taken away by those who need them. The chief business of the magistrates is to take care that no man may live idle, and that every one should labour in his trade for six hours of every twenty-four: a portion of time, which, according to Hythloday, was sufficient for an abundant supply of all the necessaries and moderate accommodations of the community, and which is not inadequate where all labour, and none apply extreme labour to the production of superfluities to gratify a few, where there are no idle priests or idle rich men, and where women of all sorts perform their light allotment of labour. To women all domestic offices which did not degrade or displease were assigned. Unhappily, however, the iniquitous and unrighteous expedient was devised, of releasing the better order of females from offensive and noisome occupations, by throwing them upon slaves. Their citizens were forbidden to be butchers, "because they think *that pity and good-nature, which are among the best of those affections that are born within us, are much impaired by the butchering of animals.*" A striking representation, indeed, of the depraving effects of cruelty to animals, but abused for the iniquitous and cruel purpose of training inferiors to barbarous habits, in order to preserve for their masters the exclusive benefit of a discipline of humanity. Slaves, too, were employed in hunting, which was deemed too frivolous and barbarous an amusement for citizens. "They look upon hunting as one of the basest parts of a butcher's business, for they account it more decent to kill beasts for the sustenance of mankind, than to take pleasure in seeing a weak, harmless, and fearful hare torn in pieces by a strong, fierce, and cruel dog." An excess of population was remedied by planting colonies; a defect, by the recall of the necessary number of former colonists; irregularities of distribution, by transferring the superfluous members of one township to supply the vacancies in another. They did not enslave their prisoners, nor the children of their own slaves. They

are criminals condemned to slavery as a punishment; which would be no injustice in itself, if they had not purchased persons so condemned in other countries, which was in effect a premium on unjust convictions. In those maladies where there is no hope of cure or alleviation, it was customary for the Utopian priests to advise the patient voluntarily to shorten his useless and burthensome life by opium or some equally easy means. In cases of suicide, without permission of the priests and the senate, the party is excluded from the honours of a decent funeral. They allow divorce in adultery, and incorrigible perverseness. Slavery is the general punishment of the highest crime. They have few laws, and no lawyers. "Utopus, the founder of the state, made a law that every man might be of what religion he pleased, and might endeavour to draw others to it by force of argument and by amicable and modest ways; but those who used reproaches or violence in their attempts were to be condemned to banishment or slavery."

The following passage is so remarkable, and has hitherto been so little considered in the history of toleration, that I shall insert it at length: — "This law was made by Utopus, not only for preserving the public peace, which, he said, suffered much by daily contentions and irreconcileable heat in these matters, but because he thought the interest of religion itself required it. As for those who so far depart from the dignity of human nature as to think that our souls died with our bodies, or that the world was governed by chance without a wise and over-ruling Providence, the Utopians never raise them to honours or offices, nor employ them in any public trust, but despise them as men of base and sordid minds; yet they do not punish such men, because they lay it down as a ground, that a man cannot make himself believe any thing he pleases: nor do they drive any to dissemble their thoughts; so that men are not tempted to lie or disguise their opinions among them, which, being a sort of fraud, is abhorred by the Utopians." A beautiful and conclusive reason, which, when it was

used for the first time, as it probably was in Utopia, must have been drawn from so deep a sense of the value of sincerity as of itself to prove that he who thus employed it was sincere. "These unbelievers are not allowed to argue before the common people; but they are suffered and even encouraged to dispute in private with their priests and other grave men, being confident that they will be cured of these mad opinions by having reason laid before them."

It may be doubted whether some extravagances in other parts of Utopia were not introduced to cover such passages as the above, by enabling the writer to call the whole a mere sport of wit, and thus exempt him from the perilous responsibility of having maintained such doctrines seriously. In other cases he seems diffidently to propose opinions to which he was in some measure inclined, but in the course of his statement to have heated himself into an indignation against the vices and corruptions of Europe, which vents itself in eloquent invectives not unworthy of Gulliver. He makes Hythloday at last declare, — "As I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the other governments that I see or know, but that they are a conspiracy of the richer sort, who, on pretence of managing the public, do only pursue their private ends." The true notion of Utopia is, however, that it intimates a variety of doctrines, and exhibits a multiplicity of projects, which the writer regards with almost every possible degree of approbation and shade of assent; from the frontiers of serious and entire belief, through gradations of descending plausibility, where the lowest are scarcely more than the exercises of ingenuity, and to which some wild paradoxes are appended, either as a vehicle, or as an easy means (if necessary) of disavowing the serious intention of the whole of this Platonic fiction.

It must be owned, that though one class of More's successors were more susceptible of judicious admiration of the beauties of Plato and Cicero than his less perfectly formed taste could be, and though another division of

them had acquired a knowledge of the words of the Greek language, and perception of their force and distinctions, for the attainment of which More came too early into the world, yet none would have been so heartily welcomed by the masters of the Lyceum and the Academy, as qualified to take a part in the discussion of those grave and lofty themes which were freely agitated in these early nurseries of human reason.

About the time of More's first journey to the continent, in the summer of 1514, not long after which Utopia was composed, may be placed the happiest period of his life. He acquired an income equivalent to four or five thousand pounds sterling of our present money, by his own independent industry and well-earned character. He had leisure for the cultivation of literature, for correspondence with his friend Erasmus, for keeping up an intercourse with European men of letters, who had already placed him in their first class, and for the composition of works, from which, unaware of the rapid changes which were to ensue, he probably promised himself more fame, or at least more popularity, than they have procured for him. His affections and his temper continued to ensure the happiness of his home, even when his son with a wife, three daughters with their husbands, and a proportionable number of grandchildren, dwelt under his patriarchal roof.

At the same period the general progress of European literature, the cheerful prospects of improved education and diffused knowledge, had filled the minds of More and Erasmus with delight. The expectation of an age of pacific improvement seems to have prevailed among studious men in the twenty years which elapsed between the migration of classical learning across the Alps, and the rise of the religious dissensions stirred up by the preaching of Luther. "I foresee," says More's colleague on his Flemish mission, "that our posterity will rival the ancients in every sort of study; and if they be not ungrateful, they will pay the greatest thanks to those who have revived these studies. Go on, and deserve well of

posterity, who will never suffer the name of Erasmus to perish." * Erasmus himself, two years after, expresses the same hopes, which, with unwonted courtesy, he chooses to found on the literary character of the conversation in the palace of Henry VIII.:—"The world is recovering the use of its senses, like one awakened from the deepest sleep; and yet there are some who cling to their old ignorance with their hands and feet, and will not suffer themselves to be torn from it." † To Wolsey he speaks in still more sanguine language, mixed with the like personal compliment:—"I see another golden age arising, if other rulers be animated by your spirit. Nor will posterity be ungrateful. This new felicity, obtained for the world by you, will be commemorated in immortal monuments by Grecian and Roman eloquence." ‡ Though the judgment of posterity in favour of kings and cardinals is thus confidently foretold, the writers do not the less betray their hope of a better age, which will bestow the highest honours on the promoters of knowledge. A better age was, in truth, to come; but the time and circumstances of its appearance did not correspond to their sanguine hopes. An age of iron was to precede, in which the turbulence of reformation and the obstinacy of establishment were to meet in long and bloody contest.

When the storm seemed ready to break out, Erasmus thought it his duty to incur the obloquy which always attends mediatorial counsels. "You know the character of the Germans, who are more easily led than driven. Great danger may arise, if the native ferocity of that people be exasperated by untimely severities. We see the pertinacity of Bohemia and the neighbouring provinces. A bloody policy has been tried without success. Other remedies must be employed. The hatred of Rome is fixed in the minds of many nations, chiefly from the rumours believed of the dissolute manners of that

* Tonstal. Erasm. 14th of Sept. 1517. Erasm. Opp. iii. p. 267.
† Tonstal. Erasm. 37. Erasm. Henric. Guildeford, 15th of May, 1519.
‡ Ib. 322. Thomas Card. Erasm. Rot. 18th of May, 1518.

city, and from the immoralities of the representatives of the supreme pontiff abroad." *

The uncharitableness, the turbulence, the hatred, the bloodshed, which followed the preaching of Luther, closed the bright visions of the two illustrious friends, who agreed in an ardent love of peace, though not without a difference in the shades and modifications of their pacific temper, arising from some dissimilarity of original character. The tender heart of More clung more strongly to the religion of his youth. Erasmus more apprehended disturbance of his tastes and pursuits, and betrays in some of his writings a temper, which might have led him to doubt whether the glimmering of probability, to which More is limited, be equivalent to the evils attendant on the search.

The public life of More began in the summer of 1514 †, with a mission to Bruges, in which Tunstall, then master of the rolls, and afterwards bishop of Durham, was his colleague, of which the object was to settle some particulars relating to the commercial intercourse of England with the Netherlands. He was consoled for a detention, unexpectedly long, by the company of Tunstall, whom he describes as one not only fraught with all learning, and severe in his life and morals, but inferior to no man as a delightful companion. ‡ On this mission he became acquainted with several of the friends of Erasmus in Flanders, where he evidently saw a progress in the accommodations and ornaments of life, to which he had been hitherto a stranger. With Peter Giles of Antwerp, to whom he intrusted the publication of Utopia by a prefatory dedication, he continued to be closely connected during the lives of both. In the year 1515, he was sent again to the Netherlands on the like mission. The intricate relations of traffic between the two countries had given rise to a succession of disputes,

* Tonstal. Erasm. 590. Pentinger. Cologne, 9th of November, 1520. To this theory neither of the parties about to contend could have assented; but it is not on that account the less likely to be in a great measure true.

† Erasm. Petro Algidio. Lond. 7th of May, 1514. Opp. iii. 135. Records of the Common Council of London.

‡ Morus Erasmo, 30th April, 1516.

in which the determination of one case generally produced new suits. As More had in the year 1510* been elected sub-sheriff of London, he obtained leave of absence from the mayor and aldermen of that city, "on occasion of both these missions, to go upon the king's ambasset to Flanders." †

In the beginning of 1516 he was made a privy-councillor; and from that time may be dated the final surrender of his own tastes for domestic life, and his predilections for studious leisure, to the flattering importunities of Henry VIII. "He had resolved," says Erasmus, "to be content with his private station; but having gone on more than one mission abroad, the king, not discouraged by the unusual refusal of a pension, did not rest till he had drawn More into the palace. For why should I not say '*drawn*,' since no man ever laboured with more industry for admission to a court, than More to avoid it? The king would scarcely ever suffer the philosopher to quit him. For if serious affairs were to be considered, who could give more prudent counsel? or if the king's mind was to be relaxed by cheerful conversation, where could there be a more facetious companion?" ‡

Roper, who was an eye-witness of these circumstances, relates them with an agreeable simplicity. "So from time to time was he by the king advanced, continuing in his singular favour and trusty service for twenty years. A good part thereof used the king, upon holidays, when he had done his own devotion, to send for him; and there, sometimes in matters of astronomy, geometry, divinity, and such other faculties, and sometimes on his worldly affairs, to converse with him. And other whiles in the night would he have him up into the leads, there to consider with him the diversities, courses, motions, and operations of the stars and planets. And because he was of a pleasant disposition, it pleased

* City Records, 3d Sept. 1510, in room of Richard Brooke, appointed recorder, perhaps the author of the well-known Abridgment of the Law.
† City Records, May 1514, and May 1515.
‡ Erasm. Hutt. 23d of July, 1519. Opp. iii. p. 628.

the king and queen, *after the council had supped* at the time of their own (*i. e.* the royal) supper, to call for him to be merry with them." What Roper adds could not have been discovered by a less near observer, and would scarcely be credited upon less authority: "When them he perceived so much in his talk to delight, that he could not once in a month get leave to go home to his wife and children (whose company he most desired), he, much misliking this restraint on his liberty, began thereupon somewhat to dissemble his nature, and so by little and little from his former mirth to disuse himself, that he was of them from thenceforth, at such seasons, no more so ordinarily sent for."* To his retirement at Chelsea, however, the king followed him. "He used of a particular love to come of a sudden to Chelsea, and leaning on his shoulder, to talk with him of secret counsel in his garden, yea, and to dine with him upon no inviting."† The taste for More's conversation, and the eagerness for his company thus displayed, would be creditable to the king, if his behaviour in after time had not converted them into the strongest proofs of utter depravity. Even in Henry's favour there was somewhat tyrannical, and his very friendship was dictatorial and self-willed. It was reserved for Henry afterwards to exhibit the singular, and perhaps solitary, example of a man who was softened by no recollection of a communion of counsels, of studies, of amusements, of social pleasures, and who did not consider that the remembrance of intimate friendship with such a man as More bound him to the observance of common humanity, or even of bare justice. In the moments of Henry's partiality, the sagacity of More was not so utterly blinded by his good-nature, that he did not in some degree penetrate into the true character of caresses from a beast of prey. "When I saw the king walking with him for an hour, holding his arm about his neck, I rejoiced, and said to sir Thomas, how happy he was whom the king had so familiarly entertained, as I had never seen

* Roper, 12.

† More's Life of Sir T. More, p. 49.

him to do to any one before, except cardinal Wolsey. 'I thank our Lord, son,' said he, 'I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any other subject within this realm: howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, when there was war between us, it should not fail to go.'"*

Utopia, composed in 1516, was printed incorrectly, perhaps clandestinely, at Paris. Erasmus's friend and printer, Froben, brought out an exact edition at Basle in 1518, which was retarded by the expectation of a preface from Buddè or Buddæus, the restorer of Greek learning in France, and probably the most critical scholar in that province of literature on the north of the Alps. It was received with loud applause by the scholars of France and Germany. Erasmus confidently observed to an intimate friend, that the second book having been written before the first, had occasioned some disorder and inequality of style; but he particularly praised its novelty and originality, and its keen satire on the vices and absurdities of Europe.

So important was the office of under-sheriff then held to be, that More did not resign it till the 23d of July, 1519†, though he had in the intermediate time served the public in stations of trust and honour. In 1521 he was knighted, and raised to the office of treasurer of the exchequer‡, a station in some respects the same with that of chancellor of the exchequer, who at present is

* Roper, 21, 22. Compare this insight into Henry's character with a declaration of an opposite nature, though borrowed also from castles and towns, made by Charles V. when he heard of More's murder.

† City Records.

‡ Est quod Moro gratuleris, nam Rex *illum nec ambientem nec flagitantem* munere magnifico honestavit addito salario nequaquam pœnitendo, est enim principi suo a thesauris. Nec hoc contentus, equitis aurati dignitatem adjecit.—*Erasm. Budd.* 1521. *Opp.* iii. 378.

"Then died master Weston, treasurer of the exchequer, whose office the king *of his own accord, without any asking, freely* gave unto sir Thomas More."—*Roper*, 13.

The minute verbal coincidences which often occur between Erasmus and Roper, cannot be explained otherwise than by the probable supposition, that copies or originals of the correspondence between More and Erasmus were preserved by Roper after the death of the former.

on his appointment to be designated by the additional name of under-treasurer of the exchequer. It is a minute, but somewhat remarkable, stroke in the picture of manners, that the honour of knighthood should be spoken of by Erasmus, if not as of superior dignity to so important an office, at least as observably adding to its consequence.

From 1517 to 1522, More was employed at various times at Bruges, in missions like his first to the Flemish government, or at Calais in watching and conciliating Francis I., with whom Henry and Wolsey long thought it convenient to keep up friendly appearances. To trace the date of More's reluctant journeys in the course of the uninteresting attempts of politicians on both sides to gain or dupe each other, would be vain, without some outline of the negotiations in which he was employed, and repulsive to most readers if the enquiry promised a better chance of a successful result. Wolsey appears to have occasionally appointed commissioners to conduct his own affairs as well as those of his master at Calais, where they received instructions from London with the greatest rapidity, and whence it was easy to manage negotiations, and to shift them speedily, with Brussels and Paris; with the additional advantage, that it might be somewhat easier to conceal from one of those jealous courts the secret dealings of that of England with the other, than if the despatches had been sent directly from London to the place of their destination. Of this commission More was once at least an unwilling member. Erasmus, in a letter to Peter Giles on the 15th of November, 1518, says, "More is still at Calais, of which he is heartily tired. He lives with great expense, and is engaged in business most odious to him. Such are the rewards reserved by kings for their favourites."* Two years after, More writes more bitterly to Erasmus, of his own residence and occupations. "I approve your determination never to be involved in the busy trifling of princes; from which, as you love me, you must wish that I were extricated. You cannot

* Erasm. Opp. iii. 357.

imagine how painfully I feel myself plunged in them, for nothing can be more odious to me than this legation. I am here banished to a petty sea-port, of which the air and the earth are equally disagreeable to me. Abhorrent as I am by nature from strife, even when it is profitable as at home, you may judge how wearisome it is here where it is attended by loss." * On More's journey in summer 1519, he had harboured hopes of being consoled by seeing Erasmus at Calais, for all the tiresome pageantry, selfish scuffles, and paltry frauds, which he was to witness at the congress of kings †, where More could find little to abate those splenetic views of courts, which his disappointed benevolence breathed in Utopia. In 1521, Wolsey twice visited Calais during the residence of More, who appears to have then had a weight in council, and a place in the royal favour, second only to those of the cardinal.

In 1523 ‡, a parliament was held in the middle of April at Westminster, in which More took a part honourable to his memory, which has been already mentioned as one of the remaining fragments of his eloquence, but which cannot be so shortly passed over here, because it was one of those signal acts of his life which must bear on it the stamp of his character. Sir John More, his father, in spite of very advanced age, was named at the beginning of this parliament one of "the triers of petitions from Gascogny," an office of which the duties had become nominal, but which still retained its ancient dignity. Sir Thomas More was chosen by the house of commons to be their speaker. He excused himself, as usual, on the ground of alleged disability. His excuse was justly pronounced to be inadmissible. The journals of parliament are lost, or at least have not been printed. The rolls of parliament exhibit only a short account of what occurred, which is necessarily an

* Erasm. Opp. iii. 589.

† Opp. iii. 450. Morus Erasmo, e Cantuariâ, 11 Jun. 1519. From the dates of the following letters of Erasmus, it appears that the hopes of More were disappointed.

‡ 14 Hen. VIII.

unsatisfactory substitute for the deficient journals. But as the matter personally concerns sir Thomas More, and as the account of it given by his son-in-law, then an inmate in his house, agrees with the abridgment of the rolls, as far as the latter goes, it has been thought proper in this place to insert the very words of Roper's narrative. It may be reasonably conjectured that the speeches of More were copied from his manuscript by his pious son-in-law.*—"Sith I perceive, most redoubted sovereign, that it standeth not with your pleasure to reform this election, and cause it to be changed, but have, by the mouth of the most reverend father in God the legate, your highness's chancellor, thereunto given your most royal assent, and have of your benignity determined far above that I may bear for this office to repute me meet, rather than that you should seem to impute unto your commons that they had unmeetly chosen, I am ready obediently to conform myself to the accomplishment of your highness's pleasure and commandment. In most humble wise I beseech your majesty that I may make to you two lowly petitions; the one privately concerning myself, the other the whole assembly of your commons' house. For myself, most gracious sovereign, that if it mishap me in any thing hereafter, that is, on the behalf of your commons in your high presence to be declared, to mistake my message, and in lack of good utterance by my mishearsal to prevent or impair their prudent instructions, that it may then like your most noble majesty to give me leave to repair again unto the commons' house, and to confer with them and take their advice what things I shall on their behalf utter and speak before your royal grace.

"Mine other humble request, most excellent prince, is this: forasmuch as there be of your commons here by

* This conjecture is almost raised above that name by what precedes. "Sir Thomas More made an oration, not now extant, to the king's highness, for his discharge from the speakership, whereunto when the king would not consent, the speaker spoke to his grace in form following."—It cannot be doubted, without injustice to the honest and amiable biographer, that he would have his readers to understand that the original of the speeches, which actually follow, were *extant* in his hands.

your high commandment assembled for your parliament, a great number which are after the accustomed manner appointed in the commons' house to heal and advise of the common affairs among themselves apart; and albeit, most dear liege lord, that according to *your most prudent advice,* by your honourable writs every where declared, there hath been as due diligence used in sending up to your highness's court of parliament the most discreet persons out of every quarter that men could esteem meet thereunto. Whereby it is not to be doubted but that there is a very substantial assembly of right wise, meet, and politique persons; yet, most victorious prince, sith among so many wise men, neither is every man wise alike, nor among so many alike well witted, every man well spoken; and it often happeth that as much folly is uttered with painted polished speech, so many boisterous and rude in language give right substantial counsel: and sith also in matters of great importance, the mind is often so occupied in the matter, that a man rather studieth what to say than how; by reason whereof the wisest man and best spoken in a whole country fortuneth, when his mind is fervent in the matter, somewhat to speak in such wise as he would afterwards wish to have been uttered otherwise, and yet no worse will had when he spake it than he had when he would so gladly change it. Therefore, most gracious sovereign, considering that in your high court of parliament is nothing treated but matter of weight and importance concerning your realm, and your own royal estate, it could not fail to put to silence from the giving of their advice and counsel many of your discreet commons, to the great hindrance of your common affairs, unless every one of your commons were utterly discharged from all doubt and fear how any thing that it should happen them to speak, should happen of your highness to be taken. And in this point, though your well-known and proved benignity putteth every man in good hope; yet such is the weight of the matter, such is the reverend dread that the timorous hearts of your

natural subjects conceive towards your highness, our most redoubted king and undoubted sovereign, that they cannot in this point find themselves satisfied, except your gracious bounty therein declared put away the scruple of their timorous minds, and put them out of doubt. It may therefore like your most abundant grace to give to all your commons here assembled your most gracious licence and pardon freely, without doubt of your dreadful displeasure, every man to discharge his conscience, and boldly in every thing incident among us to declare his advice; and whatsoever happeneth any man to say, that it may like your noble majesty, of your inestimable goodness, to take all in good part, interpreting every man's words, how uncunningly soever they may be couched, to proceed yet of good zeal towards the profit of your realm, and honour of your royal person; and the prosperous estate and preservation whereof, most excellent sovereign, is the thing which we all, your majesty's humble loving subjects, according to the most bounden duty of our natural allegiance, most highly desire and pray for."

This speech, the substance of which is in the rolls denominated the protest, is conformable to former usage, and the model of speeches made since that time in the like circumstances. What follows is more singular, and not easily reconciled with the intimate connection then subsisting between the speaker and the government, especially with the cardinal:—

"At this parliament cardinal Wolsey found himself much aggrieved with the burgesses thereof; for that nothing was so soon done or spoken therein, but that it was immediately blown abroad in every alehouse. It fortuned at that parliament a very great subsidy to be demanded, which the cardinal, fearing would not pass the commons' house, determined, for the furtherance thereof, to be there present himself. Before where coming, after long debating there, whether it was better but with a few of his lords, as the most opinion of the house was, or with his whole train royally to receive him; 'Masters,' quoth sir Thomas More, 'forasmuch as my lord cardinal lately,

ye wot well, laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this house, it shall not in my mind be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, his poll-axes, his hat, and great seal too; to the intent, that if he find the like fault with us hereafter, we may be the bolder from ourselves to lay the blame on those whom his grace bringeth here with him.' Whereunto the house wholly agreeing, he was received accordingly. Where after he had by a solemn oration, by many reasons, proved how necessary it was the demand then moved to be granted, and farther showed that less would not serve to maintain the prince's purpose; he seeing the company sitting still silent, and thereunto nothing answering, and, contrary to his expectation, showing in themselves towards his request no towardness of inclination, said to them, 'Masters, you have many wise and learned men amongst you, and sith I am from the king's own person sent hitherto unto you, to the preservation of yourselves and of all the realm, I think it meet you give me some reasonable answer.' Whereat every man holding his peace, then began to speak to one master Marney, afterwards lord Marney; 'How say you,' quoth he, 'master Marney?' who making him no answer neither, he severally asked the same question of divers others, accounted the wisest of the company; to whom, when none of them all would give so much as one word, being agreed before, as the custom was, to give answer by their speaker; 'Masters,' quoth the cardinal, 'unless it be the manner of your house, as of likelihood it is, by the mouth of your speaker, whom you have chosen for trusty and wise (as indeed he is), in such cases to utter your minds, here is, without doubt, a marvellously obstinate silence:' and thereupon he required answer of Mr. Speaker; who first reverently, on his knees, excusing the silence of the house, abashed at the presence of so noble a personage, able to amaze the wisest and best learned in a realm, and then, by many probable arguments, proving that for them to make answer was neither expedient nor agreeable

with the ancient liberty of the house; in conclusion for himself, showed, that though they had all with their voices trusted him, yet except every one of them could put into his own head their several wits, he alone in so weighty a matter was unmeet to make his grace answer. Whereupon the cardinal, displeased with sir Thomas More, that had not in this parliament in all things satisfied his desire, suddenly arose and departed."*

This passage deserves attention as a specimen of the mild independence and quiet steadiness of More's character, and also as a proof how he perceived the strength which the commons had gained by the power of the purse, which was daily and silently growing, and which could be disturbed only by such an unseasonable show of an immature authority as might too soon have roused the crown to resistance. It is one among many instances of the progress of the influence of parliaments in the midst of their apparently indiscriminate submission, and it affords a pregnant proof that we must not estimate the spirit of our forefathers by the humility of their demeanour.

The reader will observe how nearly the example of More was followed by a succeeding speaker, comparatively of no distinction, but in circumstances far more memorable, in the answer of Lenthall to Charles I., when that unfortunate prince came to the house of commons to arrest five leading members of that assembly, who had incurred his displeasure.

There is another point from which these early reports of parliamentary speeches may be viewed, and from which it is curious to consider them. They belong to that critical moment in the history of our language when it was forming a prose style,—a written diction adapted to grave and important occasions. In the passage just quoted, there are about twenty words and phrases (some of them, it is true, used more than once) which would not now be employed. Some of them are shades, such as "lowly," where we say "humble;" "com-

* Roper, p. 13—21.

pany," for "a house of parliament;" "simpleness," for "simplicity," with a deeper tinge of folly than the single word now ever has; "right," then used as a general sign of the superlative, where we say "very," or "most;" "reverend," for "reverent," or "reverential." "If it mishap me," if it should so happen, "to mishap in me," "it often happeth," are instances of the employment of the verb "hap" for happen, or of a conjugation of the former, which has fallen into irrecoverable disuse. A phrase was then so frequent as to become, indeed, the established mode of commencing an address to a superior, in which the old usage was, "It may like," or "It may please your Majesty," where modern language absolutely requires us to say, "May it please," by a slight inversion of the words retained, but with the exclusion of the word "like" in that combination. "Let" is used for "hinder," as is still the case in some public forms, and in the excellent version of the Scriptures. "Well witted" is a happy phrase lost to the language except on familiar occasions with a smile, or by a master in the art of combining words. Perhaps "enable me," for "give me by your countenance the ability which I have not," is the only phrase which savours of awkwardness or of harsh effect in the excellent speaker. The whole passage is a remarkable example of the almost imperceptible differences which mark various stages in the progress of a language. In several of the above instances we see a sort of contest for admission into the language between two phrases extremely similar, and yet a victory which excluded one of them as rigidly as if the distinction had been very wide. Every case where subsequent usage has altered or rejected words or phrases must be regarded as a sort of national verdict, which is necessarily followed by their disfranchisement. They have no longer any claim on the English language, other than that which may be possessed by all alien suppliants for naturalization. Such examples should warn a writer, desirous to be lastingly read, of the danger which attends new words, or very

new acceptations of those which are established, or even of attempts to revive those which are altogether superannuated. They show in the clearest light that the learned and the vulgar parts of language, being those which are most liable to change, are unfit materials for a durable style, and they teach us to look to those words which form the far larger portion of ancient as well as of modern language, that "well of English undefiled," which has been happily resorted to from More to Cowper, as being proved by the unimpeachable evidence of that long usage to fit the rest of our speech more perfectly, and to flow more easily, clearly, and sweetly, in our composition.

Erasmus tells us that Wolsey rather feared than liked More. When the short session of parliament was closed, Wolsey, in his gallery of Whitehall, said to More, "I wish to God you had been at Rome, Mr. More, when I made you speaker."—"Your grace not offended, so would I too, my lord," replied sir Thomas; "for then should I have seen the place I long have desired to visit."* More turned the conversation by saying that he liked this gallery better than the cardinal's at Hampton Court. But the cardinal secretly brooded over his revenge, which he tried to gratify by banishing More, under the name of an embassador to Spain. He tried to effect his purpose by magnifying the learning and wisdom of More, his peculiar fitness for a conciliatory adjustment of the difficult matters which were at issue between the king and his kinsman the emperor. The king suggested this proposal to More, who, considering the unsuitableness of the Spanish climate to his constitution, and perhaps suspecting Wolsey of sinister purposes, earnestly besought Henry not to send his faithful servant to his grave. The king, who also suspected Wolsey of being actuated by jealousy, answered, "It is not our meaning, Mr. More, to do you any hurt; but to do you good we should be glad. We shall therefore employ you otherwise."† Sir Thomas More could boast

* Roper, p. 20. † More, p. 53. with a small variation.

that he had never asked the king the value of a penny for himself. On the 25th of December, 1525*, the king appointed him chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, as successor of sir Anthony Wingfield; an office of dignity and profit which More continued to hold for nearly three years.

In the summer of 1527, Wolsey went on his magnificent embassy to France, in which More and other officers of state were joined with him. On this occasion the main, though secret object of Henry was to pave the way for a divorce from queen Catharine, with a view to a marriage with Anne Boleyn, a young beauty who had been bred at the French court, where her father, sir Thomas Boleyn, created earl of Wiltshire, had been repeatedly ambassador.

On their journey to the coast, Wolsey sounded archbishop Wareham and bishop Fisher on the important secret with which he was intrusted. Wareham, an estimable and amiable prelate, appears to have intimated that his opinion was favourable to Henry's pursuit of a divorce.† Fisher, bishop of Rochester, an aged and upright man, promised Wolsey that he should do or say nothing in the matter, nor in any way counsel the queen, except what stood with Henry's pleasure; "for," said he, "though she be queen of this realm, yet he acknowledgeth you to be his sovereign lord‡:" as if the rank or authority of the parties had any concern with the duty of honestly giving counsel where it is

* Such is the information which I have received from the records in the Tower. The accurate writer of the article on More, in the Biographia Britannica, is perplexed by finding sir Thomas More, chancellor of the duchy, as one of the negotiators of a treaty in August, 1526, which seems to the writer in the Biographia to bring down the death of Wingfield to near that time; he being on all sides acknowledged to be More's immediate predecessor. But there is no difficulty, unless we needlessly assume that the negotiation with which Wingfield was concerned related to the same treaty which More concluded. On the contrary, the first appears to have been a treaty with Spain; the last a treaty with France.

† State Papers, Hen. VIII. vol. i. p. 196. 5th July, 1527. Wolsey's words are,—"He expressly affirmed, that however displeasantly the queen took this matter, yet the truth and judgment of the law must take place. I have instructed him how he shall order himself if the queen shall demand his counsel, which he promises me to follow."

‡ State Papers, H. VIII. vol. i. p. 168.

given at all. The overbearing deportment of Wolsey probably overawed both these good prelates. Wolsey understood them in the manner most suitable to his purpose; and, confident that he should by some means finally gain them, he probably coloured very highly their language in his communication to Henry, whom he had just before displeased by unexpected scruples. But as there are no traces known to us of an active part taken by More in this negociation, it is proper to return to what concerned him more nearly. It was generally believed that More and Fisher had corrected the manuscript of Henry's answer to Luther. It is certain that the propensity of the king to theological discussions constituted one of the links of his intimacy with More.

As More's writings against the Lutherans were of great note in his own time, as they were probably those of his works on which he exerted the most acuteness, and employed most knowledge, it would be wrong to omit all mention of them in an estimate of his mind, or as proofs of his disposition. They contain many anecdotes which throw considerable light on our ecclesiastical history during the first prosecution of protestants, or, as they were then called, Lutherans, under the old statutes against Lollards, in the period which extended from 1520 to 1532; and they do not seem to have been enough examined with that view by the historians of the church.

But our concern with them is now only as they affect More. Legal responsibility, in a well-constituted commonwealth, reaches to all the avowed advisers of the government, and to all those whose concurrence is necessary to the validity of its commands. But moral responsibility is usually or chiefly confined to the actual authors of a measure. To them general opinion allots commendation or blame. It is true, that when a government has attained a state of more than usual regularity, the feelings of mankind become so well adapted to it, that men are held to be even morally responsible for sanctioning, by a base continuance in office, the bad

policy which may be known not to originate with themselves. These refinements were, however, unknown in the reign of Henry VIII. The administration was carried on under the personal direction of the monarch, who generally admitted one confidential servant only into his most secret counsels; and all the other ministers, whatever their rank might be, commonly confined their attention to the business of their own office, or to the execution of special commands intrusted to them. This system was probably carried to its utmost height under so self-willed a prince as Henry, and by so domineering a minister as Wolsey. Although there can be no doubt that More, as a privy-counsellor, attended and co-operated at the examination of the unfortunate Lutherans, his conduct in that respect was regarded by his contemporaries as little more than the enforcement of orders which he could not lawfully decline to obey. The opinion that those who disapprove are bound to resign, is of very modern origin, and still not universal, especially if fidelity to a party be not called in to its aid. In the time of Henry, a minister was not thought even entitled to resign. The fact of his attendance, indeed, appears in his controversial writings, especially by his answer to Tyndal, printed in 1532, by John Rastall, the second printer of note in England, who married Elizabeth, the sister of sir Thomas. It is not equitable to treat him as effectively and morally, as well as legally, answerable for measures of state, till the removal of Wolsey, and the delivery of the great seal into his own hands. The injustice of considering these transactions in any other light appears from the circumstance, that though he was joined with Wolsey in the splendid embassy to France in 1527, there is no reason to suppose that More was intrusted with the secret and main purpose of the embassy, — that of facilitating a divorce and a second marriage. His responsibility, in its most important and only practical part, must be contracted to the short time which extends from the 25th of October, 1529, when he was appointed chancellor, to the 16th of

May, 1532, when he was removed from his office, not much more than two years and a half.* Even within these narrow limits, it must be remembered, that he found the system of persecution established, and its machinery in a state of activity. The prelates, like most other prelates in Europe, did their part in convicting the protestants of Lollardy in the spiritual courts, who were the competent judges of that offence. Our means of determining what executions for Lollardy (if any) took place when More had a decisive ascendant in the royal councils, are very imperfect. If it were certain that he was the adviser of such executions, it would only follow that he executed one part of the criminal law, without approving it, as succeeding judges have certainly done in cases of fraud and theft, where they no more approved the punishment of death than the author of Utopia might have done in its application to heresy. If the progress of civilisation be not checked, we seem not far from the period when such capital punishments will appear as little consistent with humanity, and indeed with justice, as the burning of heretics now appears to us. More himself deprecates an appeal to his writings and those of his friend Erasmus, innocently intended by them, but abused by incendiaries, to inflame the fury of the ignorant multitude.† "Men," says he (alluding evidently to Utopia), "cannot almost now speak of such things insomuch as in play, but that such evil hearers were a great deal the worse."—"I would not now translate the Moria of Erasmus, even some works that I myself have written ere this, into English, albeit there be none harm therein." It is evident that the two philosophers, who found all their fair visions dispelled by noise and violence, deeply felt the injustice of citing against them, as a proof of inconsistency, that they departed from the pleasantries, the gay dreams, at most the fond speculations, of their early days, when they saw these harmless visions turned into

* Information from Records in the Tower.
† More's Answer to Tyndal, part i. p. 128. Printed by John Rastall, 1532.

weapons of destruction in the blood-stained hands of the boors of Saxony, and of the ferocious fanatics of Munster. The virtuous love of peace might be more prevalent in More; the Epicurean desire of personal ease predominated more in Erasmus. But both were, doubtless from commendable or excusable causes, incensed against those odious disciples, who now, "with no friendly voice," invoked their authority against themselves.

If, however, we examine the question on the grounds of positive testimony, it is impossible to appeal to a witness of more weight than Erasmus. "It is," said he, "a sufficient proof of his clemency, that while he was chancellor no man was put to death for these pestilent dogmas, while so many have suffered capital punishment for them in France, in Germany, and in the Netherlands." * The only charges against him on this subject, which are adverted to by himself, relate to minor severities; but as these may be marks of more cruelty than the infliction of death, let us listen on this subject to the words of the merciful and righteous man. †

"Divers of them have said that of such as were in my house when I was chancellor, I used to examine them with torments, causing them to be bound to a tree in my garden, and there piteously beaten. Except their sure keeping, I never did else cause any such thing to be done unto any of the heretics in all my life, except only twain: one was a child and a servant of mine in mine own house, whom his father, ere he came to me, had nursed up in such matters, and set him to attend upon George Jay. This Jay did teach the child his ungracious heresy against the blessed sacrament of the altar; which heresy this child in my house began to teach another child. And upon that point I caused a servant of mine to strip him like a child before mine household, for amendment of himself and ensample of others."—"Another was one who, after he had fallen into these frantic heresies, soon fell into plain open frensy: albeit that he had been in bedlam,

* Erasm. Fabio Episc. Vienn. (Vienne in Dauphine), Opp. iii. 1811.
† More's Apology, c. 36. English Works, pp. 900, 901. edition 1557.

and afterwards by beating and correction gathered his remembrance*; being therefore set at liberty, his old frensies fell again into his head. Being informed of his relapse, I caused him to be taken by the constables and bounden to a tree in the street before the whole town, and there striped him till he waxed weary. Verily, God be thanked, I hear no harm of him now. And of all who ever came in my hand for heresy, as help me God, else had never any of them any stripe or stroke given them, *so much as a fillip in the forehead.*"†

This statement, so minute, so easily confuted, if in any part false, was made public after his fall from power, when he was surrounded by enemies, and could have no friends but the generous. It relates circumstances of public notoriety, or at least so known to all his own household (from which it appears that protestant servants were not excluded), which it would have been rather a proof of insanity than of imprudence to have alleged in his defence, if they had not been indisputably and confessedly true. Wherever he touches this subject, there is a quietness and a circumstantiality, which are among the least equivocal marks of a man who adheres to the temper most favourable to the truth, because he is conscious that the truth is favourable to him.‡ Without relying, therefore, on the character of More for probity and veracity (which it is derogatory to him to employ for such a purpose), the evidence of his humanity having prevailed over his opinion decisively outweighs the little positive testimony produced against him. The charge against More rests originally on Fox alone, from whom it is copied by Burnet, and with considerable hesitation by Strype. But the honest martyrologist writes too

* Such was then the mode of curing insanity.

† Apology, c. 36. English Works, p. 902.

‡ There is a remarkable instance of this observation in More's Dialogue, book iii. chap. xvi., where he tells, somewhat prolixly, the story of Richard Dunn, who was found dead, and hanging in the Lollard's Tower. The only part taken by More in this affair was his share as a privy councillor in the enquiry, whether Dunn hanged himself, or was murdered and then hanged up by the bishop of London's chancellor. The evidence to prove that the death could not be suicide, was as absurd as the story of the bishop's chancellor was improbable. He was afterwards, however, convicted by a jury, but pardoned, it should seem rightly, by the king.

inaccurately to be a weighty witness in this case: for he tells us that Firth was put to death in June 1533, and yet imputes it to More, who had resigned his office a year before. In the case of James Baynham, he only says that the accused was chained to two posts for two nights in More's house, at some not specified distance of time before his execution.

Burnet, who had translated Utopia into English, in mentioning the extreme toleration taught in that work, truly observes, that if More had died at the time of its publication, "he would have been reckoned among those who only wanted a fit opportunity of declaring themselves openly for a reformation." * The same sincere and upright writer was too zealous for an historian, when he added:—"When More was raised to the chief post in the ministry, he became a persecutor even to blood, and defiled those hands which were never polluted with bribes." In excuse for the total silence of the honest bishop respecting the opposite testimony of More himself (of whom Burnet speaks even then with reverence), the reader must be reminded that the third volume of the History of the Reformation was written in the old age of the bishop of Salisbury, thirty years after those more laborious researches, which attended the composition of the two former volumes, and under the influence of those animosities against the Roman catholic church, which the conspiracy of queen Anne's last ministers against the revolution had revived with more than their youthful vigour. It must be owned that he from the commencement acquiesced too lightly in the allegations of Fox; and it is certain, that if the fact, however deplorable, had been better proved, yet in that age it would not have warranted such asperity of condemnation.†

* Burnet, Hist. of Reform. iii. part i. p. 45. Lond. 1820.

† The change of opinion in Erasmus, and the less remarkable change of More in the same respect, is somewhat excused by the excesses and disorders which followed the reformation. "To believe," says Bayle, "that the church required reformation, and to approve a particular manner of reforming it, are two very different things. To blame the opponents of reformation, and to disapprove the conduct of the reformers, are two things

The date of the work in which More denies the charge, and challenges his accusers to produce their proofs, would have roused the attention of Burnet if he had read it. This book, entitled "The Apology of Sir Thomas More," was written in 1533, "after he had given over the office of lord chancellor," and when he was in daily expectation of being committed to the Tower. Defenceless and obnoxious as he then was, no man was hardy enough to dispute his truth. Fox was the first who, thirty years afterwards, ventured to oppose it in a vague statement, which we know to be in some respects inaccurate; and on this slender authority alone has rested such an imputation on the veracity of the most sincere of men. Whoever reads the Apology will perceive, from the melancholy ingenuousness with which he speaks of the growing unpopularity of his religion in the court and country, that he could not have hoped to escape exposure, if it had been then possible to question his declaration.*

On the whole, then, More must not only be absolved; but when we consider that his administration occurred during a hot paroxysm of persecution; that intolerance was the creed of his age; that he himself, in his days of compliance and ambition, had been drawn over to it as a theory; that he was filled with alarm and horror by the excesses of the heretical insurgents in Germany;—we must pronounce him, by his abstinence from any practical share in it, to have given stronger proofs than any other man, of a repugnance to that execrable practice, founded on the unshaken basis of his natural humanity.

The fourth book of More's Dialogue † exhibits a lively

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very compatible. A man may then imitate Erasmus, without being an apostate or a traitor."—*Dict. de Bayle*, ii. p. 91. art. *Castellan.*

These are positions too reasonable to be practically believed, at the time when their adoption would be most useful.

* In the Apology, sir T. More states four tenths of the people as unable to read;—probably an overrated estimate of the number of readers.

† Dialogue of sir Thomas More, touching the pestilent sect of Luther, composed and published when he was chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, "but newly *oversene* by the said sir T. More, chancellor of England," 1530.

picture of the horror with which the excesses of the reformers had filled the mind of this good man, whose justice and even humanity were disturbed, so far at least as to betray him into a bitterness of language and harshness of opinion foreign from his general temper. The events themselves are, it must be owned, sufficient to provoke the meekest, to appal the firmest of men. "The temporal lords," he tells us, "were glad to hear the cry against the clergy; the people were glad to hear it against the clergy and the lords too. They rebelled first against an abbot, and after against a bishop, wherewith the temporal lords had good game and sport, and dissembled the matter, gaping after the lands of the spirituality, till they had almost played, as Æsop telleth of the dog, which, to snatch at the shadow of the cheese in the water, let fall and lost the cheese which he bare in his mouth. "The uplandish Lutherans set upon the temporal lords: they slew 70,000 Lutherans in one summer, and subdued the remnant in that part of Almayne into a right miserable servitude. Of this sect was the great part* of those ungracious people which of late entered Rome with the duke of Bourbon." The description of the horrible crimes perpetrated on that occasion is so disgusting in some of its particulars, as to be unfit for the decency of historical narrative. One specimen will suffice, which, considering the constant intercourse between England and Rome, is not unlikely to have been related to More by an eye-witness: —"Some took children and bound them to torches, and brought them gradually nearer to the fire to be roasted, while the fathers and mothers were looking on, and then began to speak of a price for the sparing of the children; asking first 100 ducats, then 50, then 40, then at last offered to take twain: after they had taken the last ducat from the father, then would they let the child roast to death." This wickedness (More contended) was the fruit of Luther's doctrine of predestination; "for what good deed can a man study or labour to do, who believeth Luther, that he hath no

* A violent exaggeration.

free will of his own." * "If the world were not near an end, and the fervour of devotion almost quenched, it could never have come to pass that so many people should fall to the following of so beastly a sect." He urges at very great length, and with great ability, the tendency of belief in destiny to overthrow morality; and represents it as an opinion of which, on account of its incompatibility with the order of society, the civil magistrate may lawfully punish the promulgation; little aware how decisively experience was about to confute such reasoning, however specious, by the examples of nations, who, though their whole religion was founded on predestination, were, nevertheless, the most moral portion of mankind.† "The fear," says More, "of outrages and mischiefs to follow upon such heresies, with the proof that men have had in some countries thereof, have been the cause that princes and people have been constrained to punish heresies by a terrible death; whereas else more easy ways had been taken with them. If the heretics had never begun with violence, good christian people had peradventure used less violence against them: while they forbare violence, there was little violence done unto them. 'By my soul,' quoth your friend ‡, 'I would all the world were agreed to take violence and compulsion away.' 'And sooth,' said I, 'if it were so, yet would God be too strong for his enemies.'" In answer, he faintly attempts to distinguish the case of pagans, who may be tolerated, in order to induce them to tolerate Christians, from that of heretics, from which no such advantage was to be obtained in exchange; a distinction, however, which disappeared as soon as the supposed heretics acquired supreme power. At last, however, he concludes with a sentence which sufficiently intimates the inclination of his judgment, and shows that his ancient opinions still prevailed in the midst of fear and abhorrence. "And

* Dialogue, book iv. c. 8.

† Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, English puritans, New England, French huguenots, &c.

‡ This wish is put into the mouth of the adverse speaker in the Dialogue.

yet, as I said in the beginning, never were they by any temporal punishment of their bodies any thing sharply handled till they began to be violent themselves." It is evident that his mind misgave him when he appeared to assent to intolerance as a principle; for otherwise there was no reason for repeatedly relying on the defence of society against aggression as its justification. His silence, however, respecting the notorious fact, that Luther strained every nerve to suppress the German insurgents, can never be excused by the sophistry which ascribes to all reformers the evil done by those who abuse their names. It was too much to say that Luther should not have uttered what he believed to be sacred and necessary truth, because evil-doers took occasion from it to screen their bad deeds. This controversial artifice, however grossly unjust, is yet so plausible and popular, that perhaps no polemic ever had virtue enough to resist the temptation of employing it. What other controversialist can be named, who, having the power to crush antagonists whom he viewed as the disturbers of the quiet of his own declining age, the destroyers of all the hopes which he had cherished for mankind, contented himself with severity of language (for which he humbly excuses himself in his "Apology," in some measure a dying work,) and with one instance of unfair inference against opponents who were too zealous to be merciful.

In the autumn of 1529 More returned from Cambray, where he had been once more joined in commission with his friend Tunstall as ambassador to the emperor. He paid a visit to the court, then at Woodstock. A private letter written from court to his wife, on occasion of a mishap at home, which is inserted to afford a little glimpse into the management of his most homely concerns, and especially as a specimen of his regard for a deserving woman, who was, probably, too "coarsely kind" even to have inspired him with tenderness.*

* In More's metrical inscription for his own monument, we find a just but long, and somewhat laboured, commendation of Alice, which in tenderness is outweighed by one word applied to the long departed companion of his youth.

"Chara Thomæ jacet hic Joanna uxorcula Mori."—*English Works*, 1420.

"Mistress Alyce, in my most harty will, I recomend me to you. And whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the loss of our barnes and our neighbours also, w^t^ all the corne that was therein, albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is gret pitie of so much good corne lost, yet sith it hath liked hym to send us such a chance, we must saie bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitation. He sent us all that we have lost: and sith he hath by such a chance taken it away againe, his pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth, and hartely thank him, as well for adversitie, as for prosperitie. And par adventure we have more cause to thank him for our losse, than for our winning. For his wisedom better seeth what is good for us then we do ourselves. Therefore I pray you be of good cheere, and take all the howsold with you to church, and there thank God both for that he hath given us, and for that he has left us, which if it please hym, he can increase when he will. And if it please him to leave us yet lesse, at hys pleasure be it. I praye you to make some good ensearche what my poor neighbours have loste, and bidde them take no thought therefore, and if I shold not leave myself a spone, there shall no poore neighbour of mine bere no losse by any chance happened in my house. I pray you be with my children and household mery in God. And devise somewhat with your friends, what way wer best to take, for provision to be made for corne for our household and for sede thys yere coming, if ye thinke it good that we keepe the ground still in our handes. And whether ye think it good y^t^ we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk of our farme, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit if we have more nowe than ye shall neede, and which can get the other maisters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man wer sodenly sent away he wote nere wether. At my coming hither, I perceived none other, but that I shold tary still with the kinges grace. But

now I shall (I think), because of this chance, get leave this next weke to come home and se you; and then shall we further devise together uppon all thinges, what order shall be best to take: and thus as hartely fare you well with all our children as you can wishe. At Woodstok the thirde daye of Septembre, by the hand of

"Your loving husband,

"THOMAS MORE, Knight."

A new scene now opened on More, of whose private life the above simple letter enables us to form no inadequate or unpleasing estimate. On the 25th of October 1529, sixteen days after the commencement of the prosecution against Wolsey, the king, by delivering the great seal to him at Greenwich, constituted him lord chancellor, the highest dignity of the state and of the law, which had been generally held by ecclesiastics.* A very summary account of the nature of this high office may perhaps prevent some confusion respecting it among those who know it only in its present state. The office of chancellor was known to all the European governments, who borrowed it, like many other institutions, from the usage of the vanquished Romans. In those of England and France, which most resembled each other, and whose history is most familiar and most interesting to us†, the chancellor, whose office had been a conspicuous dignity under the lower empire, was originally a secretary who derived a great part of his consequence from the trust of holding the king's seal, the substitute for subscription under illiterate monarchs, and the stamp of legal authority in more cultivated times. From his constant access to the king, he acquired every where some authority in the cases which were the frequent subject of complaint to the crown. In France, he became a minister of state with a peculiar superintendence over courts of justice, and some remains of a special jurisdiction, which continued till the downfall of the French monarchy. In the English

* Thorpe, in 1371, and Knivet, in 1372, seem to be the last exceptions.

† Ducange and Spelman Gloss. in voce "Cancellarius," who give us the series of chancellor in both countries.

chancellor were gradually united the characters of a legal magistrate and a political adviser; and since that time the office has been confined to lawyers in eminent practice. He has been presumed to have a due reverence for the law, as well as a familiar acquaintance with it, and his presence and weight in the counsels of a free commonwealth have been regarded as links which bind the state to the law.

One of the earliest branches of the chancellor's duties seems, by slow degrees, to have enlarged his jurisdiction to the extent which it reached in modern times.* From the chancery issued those writs which first put the machinery of law in motion in every case where legal redress existed. In that court new writs were framed, when it was fit to adapt the proceedings to the circumstances of a new case. When a case arose in which it appeared that the course and order of the common law could hardly be adapted, by any variation in the forms of procedure, to the demands of justice, the complaint was laid, by the chancellor, before the king, who commanded it to be considered in council; a practice which, by degrees, led to a reference to that magistrate himself. To facilitate an equitable determination in such complaints, the writ was devised called the writ of *subpœna*, commanding the person complained of to appear before the chancellor, and to answer the complaint. The essential words of a petition for this writ, which in process of time has become of so great importance, were in the reign of Richard III. as follows: "Please it therefore, your lordship, — considering that your orator has no remedy by course of the common law,—to grant a writ *subpœna*, commanding T. Coke to appear in chancery, at a certain day, and upon a certain pain to be limited by you, and then to do what by this court shall be thought reasonable and according to conscience." The form was not materially different in the earliest instances, which appear to have occurred from

* "Non facile est digito monstrare quibus gradibus, sed conjecturam accipe." — *Spel. in voc.* Cancellarius.

1380 to 1400. It appears that this device was not first employed to enforce the observance of the duties of trustees who held lands, as has been hitherto supposed*, but for cases of an extremely different nature, where the failure of justice in the ordinary courts might ensue, not from any defect in the common law, but from the power of turbulent barons, who, in their acts of outrage and lawless violence, bade defiance to all ordinary jurisdiction. In some of the earliest cases we find a statement of the age and poverty of the complainant, and of the power, and even learning, of the supposed wrong-doer; topics addressed to compassion, or at most to equity in a very loose and popular sense of the word, which throw light on the original nature of this high jurisdiction. It is apparent, from the earliest cases in the reign of Richard II., that the occasional relief proceeding from mixed feelings of pity and of regard to substantial justice, not effectually aided by law, or overpowered by tyrannical violence, had then grown into a regular system, and was subject to rules resembling those of legal jurisdiction. At first sight it may appear difficult to conceive how ecclesiastics could have moulded into a regular form this anomalous branch of jurisprudence. But many of the ecclesiastical order, originally the only lawyers, were eminently skilled in the civil and canon law, which had attained an order and precision unknown to the digests of barbarous usages then attempted in France and England. The ecclesiastical chancellors introduced into their court a course of proceeding very similar to that adopted by other

* Blackstone, book iii. c. 4.

† Calendars of Proceedings in Chanc. temp. Eliz. [London, 1827.] Of ten of these suits which occurred in the last ten years of the fourteenth century, one complains of ouster from land by violence; another, of exclusion from a benefice, by a writ obtained from the king under false suggestions; a third, for the seizure of a freeman, under pretext of being a slave (or nief); a fourth, for being disturbed in the enjoyment of land by a trespasser, abetted by the sheriff; a fifth, for imprisonment on a false allegation of debt. No case is extant prior to the first year of Henry V., which relates to the trust of lands, which eminent writers have represented as the original object of this jurisdiction. In the reign of Henry VI. there is a bill against certain Wycliffites for outrages done to the plaintiff, Robert Burton, chanter of the cathedral of Lincoln, on account of his zeal as an inquisitor in the diocese of Lincoln, to convict and punish heretics.

European nations, who all owned the authority of the canon law, and were enlightened by the wisdom of the Roman code. The proceedings in chancery, lately recovered from oblivion, show the system to have been in regular activity about a century and a half before the chancellorship of sir Thomas More, the first common lawyer who held the great seal since the chancellor had laid any foundations (known to us) of his equitable jurisdiction. The course of education, and even of negotiation in that age, conferred on More, who was the most distinguished of the practisers of the common law, the learning and ability of a civilian and a canonist. In his administration, from the 25th of October 1529, to the 16th of May 1532, four hundred bills and answers are still preserved, which afford an average of about a hundred and sixty suits annually. Though this average may by no means adequately represent the whole occupations of a court which had many other duties to perform, it supplies us with some means of comparing the extent of its business under him with the number of similar proceedings in succeeding times. The whole amount of bills and answers in the reign of James I. was 32,000. How far the number may have differed at different parts of that reign, the unarranged state of the records does not yet enable us to ascertain. But supposing it, by a rough estimate, to have continued the same, the annual average of bills and answers during the four years of lord Bacon's administration was 1461, being an increase of nearly ten-fold in somewhat less than a century. Though causes connected with the progress of the jurisdiction and the character of the chancellor must have contributed to this remarkable increase, yet it must be ascribed principally to the extraordinary impulse given to daring enterprise and national wealth by the splendid administration of Elizabeth, which multiplied alike the occasions of litigation and the means of carrying it on.* In a century and a half

* From a letter of lord Bacon (Lords' Journals, 20th March, 1680,) it appears that he made 2000 decrees and orders in a year; so that in his

after, when equitable jurisdiction was completed in its foundations and most necessary parts by lord chancellor Nottingham, the whole number of equity suits was about fifteen thousand, which yields an average of sixteen hundred and fifty to every year of his chancellorship.*

Under lord Hardwicke, the chancellor of most professional celebrity, the yearly average of bills and answers appears to have been about two thousand; probably in part because more questions had been finally determined, and partly also because the delays were so aggravated by the multiplicity of business, that parties aggrieved chose rather to submit to wrong than to be ruined in pursuit of right. This last mischief arose in a great measure from the variety of affairs added to the original duties of a chancellor, of which the principal were bankruptcy and parliamentary appeals. Both these causes continued to act with increasing force; so that, in spite of a vast increase of the property and dealings of the kingdom, the average number of bills and answers was considerably less from 1800 to 1809 than it had been from 1745 to 1754.†

It must not be supposed that men trained in any system of jurisprudence, as the ecclesiastical chancellors, could have been indifferent to the inconvenience and vexation which necessarily harass the holders of a merely arbitrary power. Not having a law, they were a law unto themselves; and every chancellor who contributed by a determination to establish a principle, became instrumental in circumscribing the power of his successor. Selden is, indeed, represented to have said, that equity is according to the conscience of him who is chancellor; which is as uncertain as if we made the chancellor's foot the standard for the measure which we call a foot.‡ But this was spoken in the looseness of

time the bills and answers amounted to about two thirds of the whole business.

* The numbers have been obligingly supplied by the gentlemen of the Record Office in the Tower.

† Account of Proceedings in Parliament relative to the Court of Chancery. By C. P. Cooper, Esq. p. 102, &c. London, 1828. A work equally remarkable for knowledge and acuteness.

‡ Table Talk, p. 55. Edinburgh, 1809.

table-talk, and under the influence of the prejudices then prevalent among common lawyers against equitable jurisdiction. Still, perhaps, in his time what he said might be true enough for a smart saying. But in process of time a system of rules was established which has constantly tended to limit the originally discretionary powers of the Chancery. *Equity*, in the acceptation in which that word is used in English jurisprudence, is no longer to be confounded with that *moral equity* which generally corrects the unjust operation of law, and with which it seems to have been synonymous in the days of Selden and Bacon. It is a part of law formed from usages and determinations which sometimes differ from what is called common law in its subjects, but chiefly varies from it in its modes of proof, of trial, and of relief; it is a jurisdiction so irregularly formed, and often so little dependent on general principles, that it can hardly be defined or made intelligible otherwise than by a minute enumeration of the matters cognisable by it.*

It will be seen from the above that sir Thomas More's duties differed very widely from the various exertions of labour and intellect required from a modern chancellor. At the utmost he did not hear more than two hundred cases and arguments yearly, including those of every description. No authentic account of any case tried before him, if any such be extant, has been yet brought to light. No law book alludes to any part of his judgments or reasonings. Nothing of this higher part of his judicial life is preserved, which can warrant us in believing more than that it must have displayed his never-failing integrity, reason, learning, and eloquence.

The particulars of his instalment are not unworthy of being specified as a proof of the reverence for his endowments and excellences professed by the king and entertained by the public, to whose judgment the ministers of Henry seemed virtually to appeal, with an assurance that the king's appointment would be ratified by

* Blackstone, book iii. c. 27. Lord Hardwicke's Letter to Lord Kames, 30th June, 1757. Lord Woodhouselee's Life of Lord Kames, vol. i. p. 237.

the general voice. "He was led between the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk up Westminster Hall to the Stone Chamber, and there they honourably placed him in the high judgment-seat of chancellor*;" (for the chancellor was, by his office, the president of that terrible tribunal.) "The duke of Norfolk, premier peer and lord high treasurer of England," continues the biographer, "by the command of the king, spoke thus *unto the people there with great applause and joy gathered together:*—

'The king's majesty (which, I pray God, may prove happie and fortunate to the whole realme of England) hath raised to the most high dignitie of chancellourship, sir Thomas More, a man for his extraordinarie worth and sufficiencie well knowne to himself and the whole realme, for no other cause or earthlie respect, but for that he hath plainely perceaved all the gifts of nature and grace to be heaped upon him, which either the people could desire, or himself wish, for the discharge of so great an office. For the admirable wisedome, integritie, and innocencie, joyned with most pleasant facilitie of witt, that this man is endowed withall, have been sufficiently knowen to all Englishmen from his youth, and for these manie yeares also to the king's majestie himself. This hath the king abundantly found in manie and weightie affayres, which he hath happily dispatched both at home and abroad; in diverse offices which he hath born, in most honourable embassages which he hath undergone; and in his daily counsell and advises upon all other occasions. He hath perceaved no man in his realme to be more wise in deliberating, more sincere in opening to him what he thought, nor more eloquent to adorne the matter which he uttered. Wherefore, because he saw in him such excellent endowments, and that of his especiall care he hath a particular desire that his kingdome and people might be governed with all equitie and justice, integritie and wisedome; he of his owne most gracious disposition hath created this singular man lord chancellor; that, by his laudable performance

* More's Life of Sir T. More, 156. 163.

of this office, his people may enjoy peace and justice; and honour also and fame may redounde to the whole kingdome. It may perhaps seeme to manie a strange and unusuall matter, that this dignitie should be bestowed upon a layman, none of the nobilitie, and one that hath wife and children; because heretofore none but singular learned prelates, or men of greatest nobilitie, have possessed this place; but what is wanting in these respects, the admirable vertues, the matchless guifts of witt and wisedome of this man, doth most plentifully recompence the same. For the king's majestie hath not regarded how great, but what a man he was; he hath not cast his eyes upon the nobilitie of his bloud, but on the worth of his person; he hath respected his sufficiencie, not his profession; finally, he would show by this his choyce, that he hath some rare subjects amongst the rowe of gentlemen and laymen, who deserve to manage the highest offices of the realme, which bishops and noblemen think they only can deserve. The rarer therefore it was, so much both himself held it to be the more excellent, and to his people he thought it would be the more gratefull. Wherefore, receave this your chancellour with joyful acclamations, at whose hands you may expect all happinesse and content.'

"Sir Thomas More, according to his wonted modestie, was somewhat abashed at this the duke's speech, in that it sounded so much to his praise; but recollecting himself as that place and time would give him leave, he answered in this sorte:—'Although, most noble duke, and you right honourable lords, and worshipfull gentlemen, I knowe all these things, which the king's majestie, it seemeth, hath bene pleased should be spoken of me at this time and place, and your grace hath with most eloquent wordes thus amplifyed, are as far from me, as I could wish with all my hart they were in me for the better performance of so great a charge; and although this your speach hath caused in me greater feare than I can well express in words: yet this incomparable favour of my dread soueraigne, by which he

showeth how well, yea how highly he conceaveth of my weakenesse, having commanded that my meanesse should be so greatly commended, cannot be but most acceptable unto me: and I cannot choose but give your most noble grace exceeding thankes, that what his majestie hath willed you briefly to utter, you, of the abundance of your love unto me, have in a large and eloquent oration dilated. As for myself, I can take it no otherwise, but that his majestie's incomparable favour towards me, the good will and incredible propension of his royall minde (wherewith he hath these manie yeares favoured me continually) hath alone without anie desert of mine at all, caused both this my new honour, and these your undeserved commendations of me. For who am I, or what is the house of my father, that the king's highnesse should heape upon me by such a perpetuall streame of affection, these so high honours? I am farre lesse then anie the meanest of his benefitts bestowed on me; how can I then thinke myself worthie or fitt for this so peerlesse dignitie? I have bene drawen by force, as the king's majestie often professeth, to his highnesse's service, to be a courtier; but to take this dignitie upon me, is most of all against my will; yet such is his highnesse's benignitie, such is his bountie, that he highly esteemeth the small dutiefulnesse of his meanest subjects, and seeketh still magnificently to recompence his servants; not only such as deserve well, but even such as have but a desire to deserve well at his hands, in which number I have alwaies wished myself to be reckoned, because I cannot challenge myself to be one of the former; which being so, you may all perceave with me how great a burden is layde upon my backe, in that I must strive in some sorte with my diligence and dutie to corresponde with his royall benevolence, and to be answerable to that great expectation, which he and you seeme to have of me; wherefore those so high praises are by me so much more grievous unto me, by how much more I know the greater charge I have to render myself worthie of, and the fewer means I have to make them goode. This

weight is hardly suitable to my weake shoulders; this honour is not correspondent to my poore desert; it is a burden, not a glorie; a care, not a dignitie; the one therefore I must beare as manfully as I can, and discharge the other with as much dexteritie as I shall be able. The earnest desire which I have alwaies had and doe now acknowledge myself to have, to satisfye by all meanes I can possible, the most ample benefitts of his highnesse, will greatly excite and ayde me to the diligent performance of all, which I trust also I shall be more able to doè, if I finde all your good wills and wishes both favourable unto me, and conformable to his royal munificence: because my serious endeavours to doe well, joyned with your favourable acceptance, will easily procure that whatsoever is performed by me, though it be in itself but small, yet will it seeme great and praiseworthie; for those things are alwaies atchieved happily, which are accepted willingly; and those succeede fortunately, which are receaved by others courteously. As you therefore doe hope for great matters, and the best at my hands, so though I dare not promise anie such, yet do I promise truly and affectionately to performe the best I shall be able.'

"When sir Thomas More had spoken these wordes, turning his face to the high judgement seate of the Chancerie, he proceeded in this manner: — 'But when I looke upon this seate, when I thinke how greate and what kinde of personages have possessed this place before me, when I call to minde who he was that sate in it last of all — a man of what singular wisdome, of what notable experience, what a prosperous and favourable fortune he had for a great space, and how at the last he had a most grievous fall, and dyed inglorious — I have cause enough by my predecessor's example to think honour but slipperie, and this dignitie not so grateful to me as it may seeme to others; for both is it a hard matter to follow with like paces or praises, a man of such admirable witt, prudence, authoritie, and splen-

dour, to whome I may seeme but as the lighting of a candle, when the sun is downe; and also the sudden and unexpected fall of so great a man as he was doth terribly putt me in minde that this honour ought not to please me too much, nor the lustre of this glistering seate dazel mine eyes. Wherefore I ascende this seate as a place full of labour and danger, voyde of all solide and true honour; the which by how much the higher it is, by so much greater fall I am to feare, as well in respect of the verie nature of the thing it selfe, as because I am warned by this late fearfull example. And truly I might even now at this verie just entrance stumble, yea faynte, but that his majestie's most singular favour towardes me, and all your good wills, which your joyfull countenance doth testifye in this most honorable assemblie, doth somewhat recreate and refresh me; otherwise this seate would be no more pleasing to me, than that sword was to Damocles, which hung over his head, tyed only by a hayre of a horse's tale, when he had store of delicate fare before him, seated in the chair of state of Denis the Tirant of Sicilie; this therefore shall be always fresh in my minde, this will I have still before mine eies, that this seate will be honorable, famous, and full of glorie unto me, if I shall with care and diligence, fidelitie and wisedome, endeavour to doe my dutie, and shall persuade myself, that the enjoying thereof may be but short and uncertaine: the one whereof my labour ought to performe; the other my predecessor's example may easily teach me. All which being so, you may easily perceave what great pleasure I take in this high dignitie, or in this most noble duke's praising of me.'

"All the world took notice now of sir Thomas's dignitie, whereof Erasmus writeth to John Fabius, bishopp of Vienna, thus:—'Concerning the new increase of honour lately happened to Thomas More, I should easily make you believe it, if I should shew you the letters of many famous men, rejoicing with much alacritie, and congratulating the king, the realme, him-

self, and also me, for More's honor, in being made lord chancellour of England.'"

When sir Thomas More was seated in his court of Chancery, his father, sir John More, who was nearly of the age of ninety, was the most ancient judge of the King's Bench. "What a grateful spectacle was it," says their descendant, "to see the son ask the blessing of the father every day upon his knees before he sat upon his own seat?"* Even in a more unceremonious age, the simple character of More would have protected these daily rites of filial reverence from the suspicions of affectation, which could alone destroy their charm. But at that time it must have borrowed its chief power from the conspicuous excellence of the father and son. For if inward worth had then borne any proportion to the grave and reverend ceremonial of the age, we might be well warranted in regarding our forefathers as a race of superior beings.

The contrast of the humble and affable More with the haughty cardinal, astonished and delighted the suitors. No application could be made to Wolsey, which did not pass through many hands; and no man could apply, whose fingers were not tipped with gold. But More sat daily in an open hall, that he might receive in person the petitions of the poor. If any reader should blame his conduct in this respect, as a breach of an ancient and venerable precept, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness *in judgment;* thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in *righteousness* shalt thou *judge* thy neighbour†:" let it be remembered, that there still clung to the equitable jurisdiction some remains of that precarious and eleemosynary nature from which it originally sprung; which, in the eyes of the compassionate chancellor, might warrant more preference for the helpless poor than could be justified in proceedings more rigorously legal.

* More's Life of Sir T. More, p. 163. † Leviticus, xix. 15.

Courts of law were jealous then, as since, of the power assumed by chancellors to issue *injunctions* to parties to desist from doing certain acts which they were by law entitled to do, until the court of Chancery should determine whether the exercise of the legal right would not work injustice. There are many instances in which irreparable wrong may be committed, before a right can be ascertained, in the ordinary course of proceedings. In such cases it is the province of the chancellor to take care that affairs shall continue in their actual condition until the questions in dispute be determined. A considerable outcry against this necessary, though invidious authority, was raised at the commencement of More's chancellorship. He silenced this clamour with his wonted prudence and meekness. Having caused one of the six clerks to make out a list of the injunctions issued by him, or pending before him, he invited all the judges to dinner. He laid the list before them; and explained the circumstances of each case so satisfactorily, that they all confessed that in the like case they would have done no less. Nay, he offered to desist from the jurisdiction, if they would undertake to contain the law within the boundaries of righteousness, which he thought they ought in conscience to do. The judges declined to make the attempt; on which he observed privately to Roper, that he saw they trusted to their influence for obtaining verdicts which would shift the responsibility from them to the juries. "Wherefore," said he, "I am constrained to abide the adventure of their blame."

Dauncey, one of his sons-in-law, alleged that under Wolsey "even the door-keepers got great gains," and was so perverted by the venality there practised that he expostulated with More for his churlish integrity. The chancellor said, that if "his father, whom he reverenced dearly, were on the one side, and the devil, whom he hated with all his might, on the other, the devil should have his right." He is represented by his descendant, as softening his answer by promising minor

advantages, such as priority of hearing, and recommendation of arbitration, where the case of a friend was bad. The biographer, however, not being a lawyer, might have misunderstood the conversation, which had to pass through more than one generation before the tradition reached him; or the words may have been a hasty effusion of good nature, uttered only to qualify the roughness of his honesty. If he had been called to perform these promises, his head and heart would have recoiled alike from breaches of equality which he would have felt to be altogether dishonest. When Heron, another of his sons-in-law, relied on the bad practices of the times, so far as to entreat a favourable judgment in a cause of his own, More, though the most affectionate of fathers, immediately undeceived him by an adverse decree. This act of common justice is made an object of panegyric by the biographer, as if it were then deemed an extraordinary instance of virtue; a deplorable symptom of that corrupt state of general opinion, which, half a century later, contributed to betray into ignominious vices the wisest of men, and the most illustrious of chancellors,—if the latter distinction be not rather due to the virtue of a More or a Somers.

He is said to have despatched the causes before him so speedily, that, on asking for the next, he was told that none remained; which is boastfully contrasted by Mr. More, his descendant, with the arrear of a thousand in the time of that gentleman, who lived in the reign of Charles I.; though we have already seen that this difference may be referred to other causes; and therefore that the fact, if true, proves no more than his exemplary diligence and merited reputation.

The scrupulous and delicate integrity of More (for so it must be called in speaking of that age) was more clearly shown after his resignation, than it could have been during his continuance in office. One Parnell complained of him for a decree obtained by his adversary Vaughan, whose wife had bribed the chancellor by a gilt

cup. He surprised the counsel at first, by owning that he received the cup as a new year's gift. Lord Wiltshire, a zealous protestant, indecently, but prematurely, exulted. "Did I not tell you, my lords," said he, "that you would find this matter true?"—"But, my lords," replied More, "hear the other part of my tale. After having drank to her of wine with which my butler had filled the cup, and when she had pledged him, he restored it to her, and would listen to no refusal." When Mrs. Croker, for whom he had made a decree against lord Arundel, came to him to request his acceptance of a pair of gloves, in which were contained 40*l.* in angels, he told her, with a smile, that it were ill manners to refuse a lady's present; but though he should keep the gloves, he must return the gold, which he enforced her to receive. Gresham, a suitor, sent him a present of a gilt cup, of which the fashion pleased him. More accepted it; but would not do so till Gresham received from him another cup of greater value, but of which the form and workmanship were less suitable to the chancellor. It would be an indignity to the memory of such a man to quote these facts as proofs of his probity; but they may be mentioned as specimens of the simple and unforced honesty of one who rejected improper offers with all the ease and pleasantry of common courtesy.

Henry, in bestowing the great seal on More, hoped to dispose his chancellor to lend his authority to the projects of divorce and second marriage, which now agitated the king's mind, and were the main objects of his policy.* Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII., had married Catharine, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, sovereigns of Castile and Aragon. As the young prince died very shortly after his nuptials, Henry obtained a dispensation from pope Julius II. to enable the princess to marry her brother-in-law, afterwards

* "Thomas Morus, doctrinâ et probitate spectabilis vir, cancellarius in Wolsæi locum constituitur. *Neutiquam Regis causæ æquior.*" — *Thuani Hist. sui Temporis*, lib. ii. c. 16. edit. Lond. 1733. i. 31.

Henry VIII. That monarch solemnised his marriage with her after his accession, and lived sixteen years in apparent harmony with her. Mary was the only child of this marriage who survived infancy; but in the year 1527 a concurrence of events arose, which tried and established the virtue of More, and revealed to the world the depravity of his master. Henry was touched by the charms of Anne Boleyn, a beautiful young lady, in her twenty-second year, the daughter of sir Thomas Boleyn, earl of Wiltshire, who had lately returned from the court of France, where her youth had been spent. At the same moment it became the policy of Francis I. to loosen all the ties which joined the king of England to the emperor. When the bishop of Tarbes, his ambassador in England, found, on his arrival in London, the growing distaste of Henry for his inoffensive and exemplary wife, he promoted the king's inclination towards divorce, and suggested a marriage with Margaret duchess of Alençon, the beautiful and graceful sister of Francis I.*

At this period Henry for the first time professed to harbour conscientious doubts whether the dispensation of Julius II. could suspend the obligation of the divine prohibition pronounced against such a marriage in the Levitical law.† The court of Rome did not dare to contend that the dispensation could reach the case if the prohibition were part of the universal law of God. Henry, on the other side, could not consistently question its validity, if he considered the precept as belonging to merely positive law. To this question, therefore, the dispute was confined, though both parties shrunk from

* "Margarita Francisci soror, spectatæ formæ et venustatis fœmina, Carolo Alenconio duce marito paulo ante mortuo, vidua permanserat. Ea destinata uxor Henrico: missique Wolsæus et Bigerronum Præsul qui de dissolvendo matrimonio cum Gallo agerent. Ut caletum appulit Wolsæus mandatum a rege contrarium accipit, rescivitque per amicos Henricum non tam Galli adfinitatem quam insanum amorem quo Annam Bolenam prosequebatur, explere velle." — *Thuan. ubi suprà.*

No trace of the latter part appears in the state papers just published.

† Leviticus, xv. 3. xx. 22. But see Deuteronomy, xxv. 5. The latter text, which allows an exception in the case of a brother's wife being left childless, may be thought to strengthen the prohibition in all cases not excepted. It may seem applicable to the precise case of Henry. But the application of that text is impossible; for it contains an injunction, of which the breach is chastised by a disgraceful punishment.

an explicit and precise avowal of their main ground. The most reasonable solution that it was a local and temporary law, forming a part of the Hebrew code, might seem at first sight to destroy its authority altogether. But if either party had been candid, this prohibition, adopted by all Christendom, might be justified by that general usage, in a case where it was not remarkably at variance with reason or the public welfare. But such a doctrine would have lowered the ground of this papal authority too much to be acceptable to Rome, and yet, on the other hand, rested it on too unexceptionable a foundation to suit the case of Henry. False allegations of facts in the preamble of the bull were alleged on the same side; but they were inconclusive. The principal arguments in the king's favour were, that no precedents of such a dispensation seem to have been produced; and that if the Levitical prohibitions do not continue in force under the Gospel, there is no prohibition against incestuous marriages in the system of the New Testament. It was a disadvantage to the church of Rome in controversy, that being driven from the low ground by its supposed tendency to degrade the subject, and deterred from the high ground by the fear of the reproach of daring usurpation, the inevitable consequence was confusion and fluctuation respecting the first principles on which the question was to be determined.

To pursue this subject through the long negotiations and discussions which it occasioned during six years, would be to lead us far from the life of sir Thomas More, even if the writer of these pages had not very recently attempted a summary account of them.* Suffice it here to say, that Clement VII. (*Medici*), though originally inclined to favour the suit† of Henry, according to the usual policy of the Roman court, which sought plausible pretexts for facilitating the divorce of kings, whose matrimonial connections might be repre-

* History of England, ii.
† Pallavicino, lib. ii. c. 15. edit. de Milan, 1745, v. i. p. 251.

sented as involving the quiet of nations; an allegation which was often enough true to be always specious. The sack of Rome and the captivity of the pontiff left Clement full of fear of the emperor's power and displeasure; it is even said that Charles V., who had discovered the secret designs of the English court, had extorted from the pope, before his release, a promise that no attempt would be made to dishonour an Austrian princess by acceding to the divorce.* The pope, unwilling to provoke Henry, his powerful and generous protector, instructed Campeggio to attempt, first, a reconciliation between the king and queen; secondly, if that failed, to endeavour to persuade her that she ought to acquiesce in her husband's desires, by entering into a cloister; a proposition which seems to show a readiness in the Roman court to wave their theological difficulties; and, thirdly, if neither of these attempts were successful, to spin out the negotiation to the greatest length, in order to profit by the favourable incidents which time might bring forth. The impatience of the king and the honest indignation of the queen defeated these arts of Italian policy. The resistance of Anne Boleyn to the irregular gratification of the king's desires, without the belief of which it is impossible to conceive the motives for his perseverance in the pursuit of an unequal marriage, opposed another impediment to the counsels and contrivances of Clement, which must have surprised and perplexed a Florentine pontiff. All these proceedings terminated in the sentence of nullity in the case of Henry's marriage with Catherine, pronounced by Cranmer, the espousal of Anne Boleyn by the king, and the rejection of the papal jurisdiction by the kingdom, which still, however, adhered to the doctrines of the Roman catholic church.

The situation of More during a great part of these memorable events was embarrassing. The great offices to which he was raised by the king, the personal favour hitherto constantly shown to him, and the natural ten-

* Id. ibid. from MS. Correspondence.

dency of his gentle and quiet disposition, combined to disincline him to resistance against the wishes of his friendly master. On the other hand, his growing dread and horror of heresy, with its train of disorders; his belief that universal anarchy would be the inevitable result of religious dissension; and the operation of seven years' controversy for the Catholic church, in heating his mind on all subjects involving the extent of her authority, made him recoil from designs which were visibly tending towards disunion with the Roman pontiff, the centre of Catholic union, and the supreme magistrate of the ecclesiastical commonwealth. Though his opinions relating to the papal authority were of a moderate and liberal nature, he at least respected it as an ancient and venerable control on licentious opinions, of which the prevailing heresies attested the value and the necessity.

Though he might have been better pleased with another determination by the supreme pontiff, it did not follow that he should contribute to weaken the holy see, assailed as it was on every side, by taking an active part in resistance to the final decision of a lawful authority. Obedience to the supreme head of the church in a case which ultimately related only to discipline, appeared peculiarly incumbent on all professed catholics. But however sincere the zeal of More for the catholic religion and his support of the legitimate supremacy of the Roman see undoubtedly were, he was surely influenced at the same time by the humane feelings of his just and generous nature, which engaged his heart to espouse the cause of a blameless and wronged princess, driven from the throne and the bed of a tyrannical husband. Though he reasoned the case as a divine and a canonist, he must have felt it as a man. That honest feeling must have glowed beneath the subtleties and formalities of doubtful and sometimes frivolous disputations. It was probably often the chief cause of conduct for which other reasons might be sincerely alleged.

In steering his course through the intrigues and pas-

sions of the court, it is very observable that More most warily retired from every opposition but that which conscience absolutely required: he shunned unnecessary disobedience as much as unconscientious compliance. If he had been influenced solely by prudential considerations, he could not have more cautiously shunned every needless opposition; but in that case he would not have gone so far. He displayed, at the time of which we now speak, that very peculiar excellence of his character, which, as it showed his submission to be the fruit of sense of duty, gave dignity to that which in others is apt to seem and to be slavish.

The anxieties of More increased with the approach towards the execution of the king's projects of divorce and second marriage. Some anecdotes of this period are preserved by the affectionate and descriptive pen of Margaret Roper's husband, which, as he evidently reports in the chancellor's language, it would be unpardonable to relate in any other words than those of the venerable man himself. Roper, indeed, like another Plutarch, consults the unrestrained freedom of his story by a disregard of dates, which, however agreeable to a general reader, is sometimes unsatisfactory to a searcher after accuracy. Yet his office in a court of law, where there is the strongest inducement to ascertain truth, and the largest experience of the means most effectual for that purpose, might have taught him the extreme importance of time as well as place in estimating the bearing and weight of testimony.

"On a time walking with me along the Thames' side at Chelsea, he said unto me, 'Now would to our Lord, son Roper, upon condition that three things were well established in Christendom, I were put into a sack, and were presently cast into the Thames.'—'What great things be those, sir?' quoth I, 'that should move you so to wish.'—'In faith, son, they be these,' said he. 'The *first* is, that whereas the most part of Christian princes be at mortal war, they were all at universal peace. The *second*, that where the church of Christ is

at present sore afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were well settled in perfect uniformity of religion. The *third*, that as the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question, it were, to the glory of God and quietness of all parties, brought to a good conclusion.' " *

On another occasion †, " before the matrimony was brought in question, when I, in talk with sir Thomas More (of a certain joy), commended unto him the happy estate of this realm, that had so catholic a prince, so grave and sound a nobility, and so loving, obedient subjects, agreeing in one faith.

' Truth it is, indeed, son Roper; and yet I pray God, as high as we sit upon the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not the day that we gladly would wish to be at league and composition with them, to let them have their churches, so that they would be contented to let us have ours quietly.' I answered, ' By my troth, it is very desperately spoken.' He, perceiving me to be in a *fume*, said merrily, — ' Well, well, son Roper, it shall not be so.' Whom," concludes Roper, " in sixteen years and more, being in his house, conversant with him, I never could perceive him as much as once in a fume."

Doubtless he was somewhat disquieted by the reflection, that some of those who now appealed to the freedom of his youthful philosophy against himself would speedily begin to abuse such doctrines by turning them against the peace which he loved, — that some of the spoilers of Rome might exhibit the like scenes of rapine and blood in the city which was his birth-place and his dwelling-place. Yet, even then, the placid mien, which had stood the test of every petty annoyance for sixteen years, was unruffled by alarms for the impending fate of his country and of his religion.

Henry used every means of procuring an opinion

* The description of the period appears to suit the year 1529, before the peace of Cambray and the recall of the legate Campeggio.

† Probably in the beginning of 1527, after the promotion of More to be chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.

favourable to his wishes from his chancellor, who excused himself as unmeet for such matters, having never professed the study of divinity. But the king "*sorely*" pressed him *, and never ceased urging him until he had promised to give his consent, at least, to examine the question, conjunctly with his friend Tunstall and other learned divines. After the examination, More, with his wonted ingenuity and gentleness, conveyed the result to his master. "To be plain with your grace, neither your bishops, wise and virtuous though they be, nor myself, nor any other of your council, by reason of your manifold benefits bestowed on us, are meet counsellors for your grace herein. If you mind to understand the truth, consult St. Jerome, St. Augustin, and other holy doctors of the Greek and Latin churches, who will not be inclined to deceive you by respect of their own worldly commodity, or by fear of your princely displeasure." † Though the king did not like what "was disagreeable to his desires, yet the language of More was so wisely tempered, that for the present he took it in good part, and oftentimes had conferences with the chancellor thereon." The native meekness of More was probably more effectual than all the arts by which courtiers ingratiate themselves, or insinuate unpalatable counsel.

Shortly after, the king again moved him to weigh and consider the great matter. The chancellor fell down on his knees, and reminding Henry of his own words on delivering the great seal, which were, — "First look upon God, and after God upon me," added, that nothing had ever so pained him as that he was not able to serve his grace in that matter, without a breach of that original injunction which he had received on the acceptance of his office. The king said he was content to accept his service otherwise, and would continue his favour; never with that matter molesting his conscience afterwards. ‡ But when the progress towards the marriage was so far advanced that he saw how soon

* Roper, p. 32. † Id. 48. ‡ Id.

the active co-operation of a chancellor must be required, he made suit to "his singular dear friend," the duke of Norfolk, to procure his discharge from this office. The duke, often solicited by More, then obtained, by importunate suit, a clear discharge for the chancellor. When he repaired to the king, to resign the great seal into his majesty's hands, Henry received him with thanks and praise for his worthy service, and assured him, that in any suit that should either concern his honour or appertain unto his profit, the king would show himself a good and gracious master to his faithful servant. The king directed Norfolk, when he installed his successor, to declare publicly, that his majesty had with pain yielded to the prayers of sir Thomas More, by the removal of such a magistrate. *

At the time of his resignation he asserted, and circumstances, without reference to his character, demonstrate the truth of his assertion, that his whole income, independent of grants from the crown, did not amount to more than 50*l.* yearly. This was not more than an eighth part of his gains at the bar and his judicial salary from the city of London taken together, — so great was the proportion in which his fortune had declined during eighteen years of employment in offices of such trust, advantage, and honour. † In this situation the clergy voted, as a testimonial of their gratitude to him, the sum of 5000*l.* pounds, which was a hundred times the amount of his income; and, according to the rate of interest at that time, would have yielded him 500*l.* a year, being ten times the yearly sum which he could then call his own. But good and honourable as he knew their messengers to be, of whom Tunstall was one, he declared that he would *rather cast their money into the sea than take it:* not speaking from a boastful pride, most foreign from his nature, but shrinking with a sort of instinctive delicacy from the touch of money,

* "Honorifice jussit rex de me testatum reddere quod ægre ad preces meas me demiserit." — *Mori Ep. ad Erasm.*

† Apology, c. x. English Works, p. 867.

even before he considered how much the acceptance of the gift might impair his usefulness.

His resources were of a nobler nature. The simplicity of his tastes and the moderation of his indulgences rendered retrenchment a task so easy to himself, as to be scarcely perceptible in his personal habits. His fool or jester, then a necessary part of a great man's establishment, he gave to the lord mayor for the time being. His first care was to provide for his attendants, by placing his gentlemen and yeomen with peers and prelates, and his eight watermen in the service of his successor sir T. Audley, to whom he gave his great barge, one of the most indispensable appendages of his office in an age when carriages were unknown. His sorrows were for separation from those whom he loved. He called together his children and grandchildren, who had hitherto lived in peace and love under his patriarchal roof, and, lamenting that he could not as he was wont, and as he gladly would, bear out the whole charges of them all himself, continue living together as they were wont, he prayed them to give him their counsel on this trying occasion. When he saw them silent, and unwilling to risk an opinion, he gave them his, seasoned with his natural gaiety, and containing some strokes illustrative of the state of society at that time.— "I have been brought up," quoth he, "at Oxford, at an inn of Chancery, at Lincoln's Inn, and also in the king's court, from the lowest degree to the highest, and yet I have at present left me little above 100*l.* a year" (including the king's grants); "so that now if we like to live together we must be content to be contributaries together; but we must not fall to the lowest fare first: — we will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, where many right worshipful and of good years do live full well; which, if we find not ourselves the first year able to maintain, then will we the next year go one step to New Inn fare: if that year exceed our ability, we will the next year descend to Oxford fare, where many grave, learned, and ancient fathers are continually con-

versant. If our ability stretch not to maintain either, then may we yet with bags and wallets go a begging together, and hoping for charity at every man's door, to sing *Salve regina;* and so still keep company and be merry together." *

On the Sunday following his resignation, he stood at the door of his wife's pew in the church, where one of his dismissed gentlemen had been used to stand, and making a low obeisance to Alice as she entered, said to her with perfect gravity,—" Madam, my lord is gone." He who for seventeen years had not raised his voice in displeasure, would not be expected to sacrifice the gratification of his innocent merriment to the heaviest blows of fortune. Nor did he at fit times fail to prepare his beloved children for those more cruel strokes which he began to foresee. Discoursing with them, he enlarged on the happiness of suffering, for the love of God, the loss of goods, of liberty, of lands, of life. He would further say unto them, that if he might perceive his wife and children would encourage him to die in a good cause, it should so comfort him, that for very joy it would make him run merrily to death.

It must be owned that Henry felt the weight of this great man's opinion, and tried every possible means to obtain at least the appearance of his spontaneous approbation. After the marriage with queen Anne, the king commanded Tunstall and other prelates to desire his attendance at the coronation at Westminster. They wrote a letter to persuade him to comply, and accompanied it with the needful present of 20*l.* to buy a court dress. Such overtures he had foreseen; for he said some time before to Roper, when he first heard of that marriage, " God grant, son Roper, that these matters within a while be not confirmed with oaths!" He accordingly answered his friends the bishops well: — " Take heed, my lords: by procuring your lordships to be present at the coronation, they will next ask you to preach for the

* Roper, pp. 51, 52.

setting forth thereof; and finally to write books to all the world in defence thereof."

This warning letter was not likely to be acceptable to Henry. An opportunity presented itself for trying another, in which it is very probable that he, in the first instance, limited his plan to menace, which he thought would be sufficient to subdue the obstinacy of More, whom a man of violent nature might believe to be fearful, because he was peaceful. Elizabeth Barton, called the holy maid of Kent, who had been, for a considertable number of years, afflicted by convulsive maladies, felt her morbid susceptibility so excited by Henry's profane defiance of the catholic church, and his cruel desertion of Catharine, his faithful wife, that her pious and humane feelings led her to represent, and probably to believe herself to be visited by a divine revelation of those punishments which the king was about to draw down on himself and on the kingdom. In the universal opinion of the sixteenth century, such interpositions were considered as still occurring. The neighbours and visiters of the unfortunate young woman believed her ravings to be prophecies, and the contortions of her body to be those of a frame heaving and struggling under the awful agitations of divine inspiration, and confirmed that conviction of a mission from God, for which she was predisposed by her own pious benevolence, combined with the general error of the age. Both Fisher and More appear not to have altogether disbelieved her pretensions. More expressly declared, that he durst not and would not be bold in judging her miracles.* In the beginning of her prophecies, he had been commanded by the king to enquire into her case; and he made a report to Henry, who agreed with More in considering the whole of her miraculous pretensions as frivolous, and deserving no farther regard. But in 1532, several monks † so magnified her performances to him that he was prevailed on

* More's letter to Cromwell, probably written in the end of 1532.
† Of whom some were afterwards executed.

to see her; but refused to hear her speak about the king, saying to her, in general terms, that he had no desire to pry into the concerns of others. Pursuant, as it is said, to a sentence by or in the Star Chamber, she stood in the pillory at Paul's Cross, acknowledging herself to be guilty of the imposture of claiming inspiration, and saying that she was tempted to this fraud by the instigation of the devil. Considering the circumstances of the case, and the character of the parties, it is far more probable that the ministers should have obtained a false confession from her hopes of saving her life, than that a simple woman should have contrived and carried on, for many years, a system of complicated and elaborate imposture. It would not be inconsistent with this acquittal, to allow that, in the course of her self-delusion, she should have been induced, by some ecclesiastics of the tottering church, to take an active part in these pious frauds, which there is too much reason to believe that persons of unfeigned religion have been often so far misguided by enthusiastic zeal, as to perpetrate or to patronise.

But whatever were the motives or the extent of the holy maid's confession, it availed her nothing; for in the session of parliament which met in January, 1534, she and her ecclesiastical prompters were attainted of high treason, and adjudged to suffer death as traitors: Fisher bishop of Rochester, with others, were all attainted of misprision or concealment of treason, for which they were adjudged to forfeiture and imprisonment during the king's pleasure.* The holy maid, with her spiritual guides, suffered death at Tyburn on the 21st of April; she confirming her former confession, but laying her crime to the charge of her companions, if we may implicitly believe historians of the victorious party.†

Fisher and his supposed accomplices in misprision remained in prison according to their attainder. Of More the statute makes no mention; but it contains a

* 25 H. 8. c. 12. Stat. of the Realm, iii. p. 446.
† Such as Hall and Holinshed.

provision, which, when it is combined with other circumstances to be presently related, appear to have been added to the bill for the purpose of providing for his safety. By this provision, the king's majesty, at the humble suit of his well beloved wife queen Anne, pardons all persons not expressly by name attainted by the statute, for all misprision and concealments relating to the false and feigned miracles and prophecies of Elizabeth Barton, on or before the 20th day of October, 1533. Now we are told by Roper*, "that sir Thomas More's name was originally inserted in the bill," the king supposing that this bill would to sir Thomas More be so troublous and terrible, that it would force him to relent and condescend to his request; wherein his grace was much deceived. Sir Thomas was personally to be received in his own defence to make answer. But the king, not liking that, sent the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor, the duke of Norfolk, and Cromwell, to attempt the conversion of More. Audley reminded More of the king's special favour and many benefits. More admitted them; but modestly added, that his highness had most graciously declared that on this matter More should be molested no more. When in the end they saw that no persuasion could move him, they then said, "that the king's highness had given them in commandment, if they could by no gentleness win him, in the king's name with ingratitude to charge him, that never was servant to his master so villainous†, nor subject to his prince so traitorous as he." They even reproached him for having either written in the name of his master, or betrayed his sovereign into writing, the book against Luther, which had so deeply pledged Henry to the support of papal pretensions. To these upbraidings he calmly answered, "The terrors are argu-

* P. 62.

† Like a *slave* or a *villain*. The word in the mouth of these gentlemen appears to have been in a state of transition, about the middle point between the original sense of "like a slave," and its modern acceptation of mean or malignant offenders. What proof is not supplied by this single fact in the history of the language of the masters, of their conviction, that the slavery maintained by them doomed the slaves to depravity.

ments for children, and not for me. As to the fact, the king knoweth, that after the book was finished by his highness's appointment, or the consent of the maker, I was only a sorter out and placer of the principal matters therein contained." He added, that he warned the king of the prudence of "touching the pope's authority more slenderly, and that he had reminded Henry of the statutes of premunire," whereby "a good part of the pope's pastoral care was pared away;" to which the impetuous monarch answered, "We are so much bounden unto the see of Rome, that we cannot do too much honour unto it." On More's return to Chelsea from his interview with these lords, Roper said to him—"I hope all is well, since you are so merry?"—"It is so, indeed," said More, "I thank God."—"Are you, then, out of the parliament bill?" said Roper.—"By my troth, In ever remembered it; but," said More, "I will tell thee why I was so merry; because I had given the devil a foul fall, and that with those lords I had gone so far, as without great shame I never go back again." A frank avowal of the power of temptation, and a simple joy at having at the hazard of life escaped from the farther seductions of the court, bestowing a greatness on these few and familiar words which scarcely belongs to any other of the sayings of man.

Henry, incensed at the failure of wheedling and threatening messages, broke out into violent declarations of his resolution to include More in the attainder, and said that he should be personally present to ensure the passing of the bill. Lord Audley and his colleagues on their knees besought their master to forbear, lest by an overthrow in his own presence, he might be contemned by his own subjects, and dishonoured throughout Christendom for ever; adding, that they doubted not that they should find a more meet occasion "to serve his turn;" for that in this case of the nun he was so clearly innocent, that men deemed him far worthier of praise than of reproof. Henry was compelled to yield.* Such

* The house of lords addressed the king, praying him to declare whether

was the power of defenceless virtue over the slender remains of independence among slavish peers, and over the lingering remnants of common humanity which might still be mingled with a cooler policy in the bosoms of subservient politicians. One of the worst of that race, Thomas Cromwell, on meeting Roper in the parliament house next day after the king assented to the prayer of his ministers, told him to tell More that he was put out of the bill. Roper sent a messenger to Margaret Roper, who hastened to her beloved father with the tidings. More answered her, with his usual gaiety and fondness, "In faith, Megg, what is put off is not given up."* Soon after, the duke of Norfolk said to him,—"By the mass! master More, it is perilous striving with princes; the anger of a prince brings death."—"Is that all, my lord? then the difference between you and me is but this—*that I shall die to-day, and you to-morrow.*" No life in Plutarch is more full of happy sayings and striking retorts than that of More. But the terseness and liveliness of his are justly overlooked in the contemplation of that union of perfect simplicity with moral grandeur, which, perhaps, no other human being has so uniformly reached.

By a tyrannical edict, miscalled a law, in the same session of 1533–4, it was made high treason, after the 1st of May, 1534, by writing, print, deed, or act, to do or to procure, or cause to be done or procured, any thing to the prejudice, slander, disturbance, or derogation of the king's lawful matrimony with queen Anne. If the same offences were committed by words, they were only misprision. The same act enjoined all persons to take an oath to maintain *the whole contents* of the statute, and an obstinate refusal to make such oath was sub-

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it would be agreeable to his pleasure that sir T. More and others should not be heard in their own defence before "the lords in the royal senate called the *Stere* Chamber." Nothing more appears on the journals relating to this matter. Lords' Journ. 6th March, 1533. The journals prove the narrative of Roper, from which the text is composed, to be as accurate as it is beautiful.

* He spoke to her in his conversational Latin,—"*Quod differtur non aufertur.*"

jected to the penalties of misprision. This statute prescribed no form for the oath. On the 30th of March*, however, which was the day of closing the session, the chancellor Audley, when the commons were at the bar, but when they could neither deliberate nor assent, read the king's letters patent, containing the form of an oath, and appointing the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor, the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, to be commissioners for administering it.

Sir T. More was summoned to appear before these commissioners at Lambeth, on Monday the 13th of April, 1534. "On other occasions he evermore used, at his departure from his wife and children, whom he tenderly loved, to have them brought to his boat, and there to kiss them, and bid them all farewell. At that time he would suffer none of them to follow him forth of the gate, but pulled the wicket after him, and shut them all from him, and with Roper and four servants took boat towards Lambeth. He sat for a while; but at last, his mind being lightened and relieved by those high principles to which with him every low consideration yielded, whispered — "Son Roper! I thank our Lord, the field is won." — "As I conjectured," says Roper, "it was for that his love to God conquered his carnal affections." An account of his conduct during the examination at Lambeth was sent by him to his darling child, Margaret Roper.† After having read the statute and the form of the oath, he declared his readiness to swear that he would maintain and defend the order of succession to the crown as established by parliament. He disclaimed all censure of those who had imposed, or on those who had taken, the oath, but declared it to be impossible that he should swear to the whole contents of it, without offending against his own conscience; adding, that if they doubted whether his refusal proceeded from pure scruple of conscience or from his own phantasies, he was willing to satisfy their doubts by

* Lords' Journ. p. 82.
† English Works, 1428—1430.

oath. The commissioners urged that he was the first who refused it: they showed him the subscriptions of all the lords and commons who had sworn; they held out the king's sure displeasure at the single recusant. When he was called on a second time, they charged him with obstinacy for not mentioning any special part of the oath which wounded his conscience.

He answered, that if he were to open his reasons for refusal farther, he should exasperate the king still more. He offered, however, to assign his reasons if the lords would procure his highness's gracious assurance that the avowal of the grounds of his defence should not be considered as offensive to the king, nor prove dangerous to himself. The commissioners answered that such assurances would be no defence against a legal charge. He offered, however, to trust himself to the king's honour. Cranmer took some advantage of More's candour, urging that, as he had disclaimed all blame of those who had sworn, it was evident that he thought it only doubtful whether the oath was unlawful; and desired him to consider whether the obligation to obey the king was not absolutely certain. He was struck with the subtilty of this reasoning, which took him by surprise, but not convinced of its solidity. Notwithstanding his surprise, he seems to have almost touched the true answer, that as the oath contained a profession of opinion, such, for example, as the lawfulness of the king's marriage, on which men might differ, it might be declined by some and taken by others with equal honesty. Cromwell, whom More believed to favour him, loudly swore that he would rather see his only son had lost his head than that More had thus refused the oath. Cromwell bore the answer to the king, and chancellor Audley distinctly enjoined him to state very clearly More's willingness to swear to the succession. "Surely," said More, "as to swearing to the succession, I see no peril." Cromwell was not a good man, but the gentle virtue of More subdued even the bad. He never more returned to his house, being committed to the custody of the abbot of Westminster,

in which he continued four days; and at the end of that time he was conveyed to the Tower* on Friday the 17th of April, 1534.

Before the end of the session, 1534, two statutes† were passed to attaint More and Fisher of misprision of treason, specifying the punishment to be imprisonment of body and loss of goods. By that which relates to More, the king's grants of land to him in 1523 and 1525 are resumed; it is alleged that he refused the oath since the 1st of May of 1534, with an intent to sow sedition; and he is reproached for having demeaned himself in other respects ungratefully and unkindly to the king, his benefactor.

In the session which began on the 3d of November, 1534‡, an act was passed which ratifies and professes to recite the form of oath promulgated on the day of the prorogation; and enacts that the oath above recited shall be *reputed* to be the very oath intended by the former act of succession§, though there were, in fact, some substantial and important interpolations in the latter act; such as the words "most dear and entirely beloved, lawful wife, queen Anne," which tended to render that form still less acceptable than before, to the scrupulous consciences of More and Fisher.

That this statement of the legislative measures which affected them is necessary to a consideration of the legality of More's trial, which must be owned to be a part of its justice, will appear in its proper place. In the mean time, the few preparatory incidents which occurred during thirteen months' imprisonment, must be briefly related. His wife Alice, though an excellent housewife,

* Roper tells us that the king, who had intended to desist from his importunities, was exasperated by queen Anne's clamour to tender the oath at Lambeth. But he detested that unhappy lady, whose marriage was the the occasion of More's ruin; and though Roper was an unimpeachable witness relating to sir Thomas's conversation, he is of less weight as to what passed in the interior of the palace. The ministers might have told such a story to excuse themselves to Roper. Anne could have had no opportunity of contradiction.

† 26 H. VIII. c. 22, 23.

‡ Id. c. 2.

§ 25 H. VIII. c. 22. § 9. Compare 1 Lords' Journ. 82.

yet in her visits to the Tower handled his misfortunes and his scruples too roughly. "Like an ignorant, and somewhat worldly, woman, she bluntly said to him, 'How can a man taken for wise, like you, play the fool in this close filthy prison, when you might be abroad at your liberty, if you would but do as the bishops have done?'" She enlarged on his fair house at Chelsea, "his library, gallery, garden, and orchard, together with the company of his wife and children." He bore with kindness in its most unpleasing form, and answered her cheerfully after his manner, which was to blend religious feelings with quaintness and liveliness. "Is not this house as nigh heaven as mine own?" She answered him in a homely exclamation of contempt*, of which the origin or meaning cannot now be ascertained, "*Tilly valle, tilly valle.*"† He treated her harsh language as a wholesome exercise for his patience, and replied with equal mildness, though with more gravity, "Why should I joy in my gay house, when if I should rise from the grave in seven years, I should not fail to find some one there who would bid me to go out of doors, for it was none of mine?" It was not thus that his Margaret Roper conversed or corresponded with him during his confinement. A short note written to her a little while after his commitment, with a coal (his only pen and ink) begins, "Mine own good daughter," and is closed in the following fond and pious words:—"Written with a coal, by your tender loving father, who in his poor prayers forgetteth none of you, nor your babes, nor your good husbands, nor your father's shrewd wife neither." Shortly after, mistaking the sense of a letter from her, which he thought advised him to compliance, he wrote a letter to her which rebukes her supposed purpose with the utmost vehemence of affection, and the deepest regard to her judgment. "I hear many terrible things towards me; but they all never touched me, never so near, nor were they so grievous unto me as to see you, my well beloved

* Roper, 78. † Nares's Glossary, London, 1822.

child, in such a piteous and vehement manner, labour to persuade me to a thing whereof I have of pure necessity, for respect unto myne own soul, so often given you so precise an answer before. The matters that move my conscience I have sundry times shown you, that I will disclose them to no one.* Margaret's reply was worthy of herself. She acquiesces in his "faithful and delectable letter, the faithful messenger of his virtuous mind," and almost rejoices in his victory over all earthborn cares. She concludes thus:—"Your own most loving obedient daughter and bedeswoman†, Margaret Roper, who desireth above all worldly things to be in John Wood's stede to do you some service." This John Wood was the servant permitted to attend sir Thomas More in the Tower. After another interval, however, pity prevailed so far as to obtain the king's licence for Margaret Roper to resort to him in the Tower. It would be blamable to seek for bad motives in the case of so merciful an alleviation of punishment.

On her first visit, after gratefully performing their accustomed devotions, his first care was to soothe her afflicted heart by the assurance that he saw no cause to reckon himself in worse case there than in his own house. On another occasion he asked her how queen Anne did. "In faith, father," said she, "never better."—"Never better, Megg!" quoth he; "alas! Megg, it pitieth me to remember into what misery, poor soul, she shall shortly come."‡ Various attempts continued still to be made to cajole him; partly, perhaps, with the hope that his intercourse with the beloved Margaret might have softened him. Cromwell told him that the king was still his good master, and did not wish to press his conscience. The lords commissioners went twice to the Tower to tender the oath to him. But neither he nor Fisher would advance farther than their original declaration of perfect willingness to maintain the settlement of the crown, which, being a matter purely poli-

* English Works, 1430.
† Id. 1431. Bedesman—one who prays for another.
‡ Roper, 72.

tical, was within the undisputed competence of parliament. They refused to include in their oath any other matter on account of scruples of conscience, which they forbore to particularise, lest they might thereby furnish their enemies with a pretext for representing their defence as a new crime. As their real ground, which was, that it would be insincere in them to declare upon oath, that they believed the king's marriage with Anne to be lawful, they might, by the statement of that ground in defending themselves against a charge of misprision of treason, have incurred the penalties of high treason.

Two difficulties occurred in reconciling the destruction of sir Thomas More with any form or colour of law. The first of them consisted in the circumstance that the naked act of refusing the oath was, even by the late statute, punishable only as a misprision; and though concealment of treason was never expressly declared to be only a misprision till the statute to that effect was passed under Philip and Mary *, chiefly perhaps occasioned by the case of More, yet it seemed strange thus to prosecute him for the refusal, as an act of treason, after it had been positively made punishable as a misprision by a general statute, and after a special act of attainder for misprision had been passed against him. Both these enactments were, on the supposition of the refusal being indictable for treason, absolutely useless, and such as tended to make More believe that he was safe as long as he remained silent. The second has been already intimated, that he had yet said nothing which could be tortured into a semblance of those acts derogatory from the king's marriage, which had been made treason. To conquer this last difficulty, sir Robin Rich the solicitor-general undertook the infamous task of betraying More into some declaration, which might be pretended to be treasonable, in a confidential conversation, and under pretext of familiar friendship. What the success of this flagitious attempt was, the reader will see in the account of More's trial. It appears from a letter of

* 1 & 2 Phil. and Mar. c. 10. s. 8.

Margaret Roper, apparently written in the winter of 1584–5, that his persecutors now tried another expedient for vanquishing his constancy, by restraining him from church, and she adds, "from the company of my good mother and his poor children."* More, in his answer, expresses his wonted affection in very familiar, but in most significant, language: — "If I were to declare in writing how much pleasure your daughterly loving letters gave me, a peck of coals would not suffice to make the pens." So confident was he of his innocence, and so safe did he deem himself on the side of law, that "he believed some new causeless suspicion, founded upon some secret sinister information," had risen up against him.†

On the 2d or 3d of May, 1535, sir Thomas More informed his dear daughter of a visit from Cromwell, attended by the attorney and solicitor general, and certain civilians, at which Cromwell urged to More the statute which made the king head of the church, and required an answer on that subject. More replied; "I am the king's true faithful subject, and daily bedesman: I say no harm, and do no harm; and if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live." This ineffectual attempt was followed by another visit from Cranmer, the chancellor, the duke of Suffolk, the earl of Wiltshire, and Cromwell, who, after much argument, tendered an oath, by which he was to promise to make answers to questions which they might put‡; and on his decisive refusal, Cromwell gave him to understand that, agreeably to the language at the former conference, "his grace would follow the course of his laws towards such as he should find obstinate." Cranmer, who too generally complied with evil counsels, but nearly always laboured to prevent their execution, wrote a persuasive letter to Cromwell, earnestly praying the king to be content with More and Fisher's proffered engagement to maintain the succession, which would render the whole

* Engl. Works, 1446. † Id. 1447.
‡ More to Margaret Roper. Engl. Works, 1452.

nation unanimous on the practical part of that great subject.

On the 6th of May, 1535, almost immediately after the defeat of every attempt to practise on his firmness, More was brought to trial at Westminster, and it will scarcely be doubted, that no such culprit stood at any European bar for a thousand years. It is rather from caution than from necessity that the ages of Roman domination are excluded from the comparison. It does not seem that in any moral respect Socrates himself could claim a superiority. It is lamentable that the records of the proceedings against such a man should be scanty. We do not certainly know the specific offence of which he was convicted. There does not seem, however, to be much doubt that the prosecution was under the act "for the establishment of the king's succession," passed in the session 1533–4*, which made it high treason "to do any thing to the prejudice, slander, disturbance, or derogation of the lawful marriage" between Henry and Anne. Almost any act, done or declined, might be forced within the undefined limits of such vague terms. In this case the prosecutors probably represented his refusal to answer certain questions which, according to them, must have related to the marriage, his observations at his last examination, and especially his conversation with Rich, as overt acts of that treason, inasmuch as it must have been known by him that his conduct on these occasions tended to create a general doubt of the legitimacy of the marriage.

To the first alleged instance of his resistance to the king, which consisted in his original judgment against the marriage, he answered in a manner which rendered reply impossible; "that it could never be treason for one of the king's advisers to give him honest advice." On the like refusal respecting the king's headship of the church, he answered that "no man could be punished for silence." The attorney general said, that the prisoner's silence was "malicious." More justly answered,

* 25 H. VIII. c. 22.

that "he had a right to be silent where his language was likely to be injuriously misconstrued." Respecting his letters to bishop Fisher, they were burnt, and no evidence was offered of their contents, which he solemnly declared to have no relation to the charges. And as to the last charge, that he had called the act of settlement "a two-edged sword, which would destroy his soul if he complied with it, and his body if he refused," it was answered by him, that "he supposed the reason of his refusal to be equally good, whether the question led to an offence against his conscience, or to the necessity of criminating himself."

Cromwell had before told him, that though he was suffering perpetual imprisonment for the misprision, the punishment did not release him from his allegiance, and he was amenable to the law for treason. Cromwell overlooked the essential circumstances, that the facts laid as treason were the same on which the attainder for misprision was founded. Even if that were not a strictly maintainable objection in technical law, it certainly showed the flagrant injustice of the whole proceeding.

The evidence, however, of any such strong circumstances attendant on the refusal as could raise it into an act of treason must have seemed defective; for the prosecutors were reduced to the necessity of examining Rich, one of their own number, to prove circumstances of which he could have had no knowledge, without the foulest treachery on his part. Rich said, that he had gone to More as a friend, and asked him, if an act of parliament had made Rich king, More would not acknowledge him. Sir Thomas said, "Yes, sir, that I would."—"If they declared me pope, would you acknowledge me?"—"In the first case, I have no doubt about temporal governments; but suppose the parliament should make a law that God should not be God, would you then, Mr. Rich, say that God should not be God?"—"No," says Rich, "no parliament could make such a law." Rich went on to swear, that sir Thomas More added, "No more could the parliament make the

king supreme head of the church." More denied the latter part of Rich's evidence altogether; which is, indeed, inconsistent with the whole tenour of his language. More was then compelled to expose the profligacy of Rich's character. "I am," he said, "more sorry for your perjury, than for mine own peril. Neither I, nor any man, ever took you to be a person of such credit as I could communicate with on such matters. We dwelt near in one parish, and you were always esteemed very light of your tongue, and not of any commendable fame. Can it be likely to your lordships that I should so unadvisedly overshoot myself, as to trust Mr. Rich with what I have concealed from the king, or any of his noble and grave counsellors?"

The credit of Rich was so deeply wounded, that he was compelled to call sir Richard Southwell, and Mr. Palmer, who were present at the conversation, to prop his tottering evidence. They made a paltry excuse, by alleging that they were so occupied in removing More's books, that they did not listen to the words of this extraordinary conversation. The jury*, in spite of these circumstances, convicted sir Thomas More. Chancellor Audley, who was at the head of the commission, of which Spelman and Fitzherbert, eminent lawyers, were members, was about to pronounce judgment, when he was interrupted by sir Thomas More, who claimed the usual privilege of being heard to show that judgment should not be passed.

More urged, that he had so much ground for his scruples as at least to exempt his refusal from the imputation of disaffection, or of what the law deems to be malice. The chancellor asked him once more how his scruples could balance the weight of the parliament, people, and church of England? a topic which had been used against him at every interview and conference since he was brought prisoner to Lambeth. The appeal to

* Sir T. Palmer, sir T. Bent, G. Lovell, esquire, Thomas Burbage, esquire, G. Chamber, gentleman, Edward Stockmore, William Brown, Jasper Leake, Thomas Bellington, John Parnell, Richard Bellamy, and G. Stoakes, gentlemen, were the jury.

weight of authority influencing conscience was, however, singularly unfortunate. More answered, as he had always done, "Nine out of ten of Christians now in the world think with me. Nearly all the learned doctors and holy fathers who are already dead, agree with me: and therefore I think myself not bound to conform my conscience to the councell of one realm against the general consent of all Christendom." Chief Justice Fitzjames concurred in the sufficiency of the indictment; which, after the verdict of the jury, was the only matter before the court.

The chancellor then pronounced the savage sentence which the law directed in cases of treason. More, having no longer any measures to keep, openly declared, that after seven years' study, "he could find no colour for holding that a layman could be head of the church." The commissioners once more offered him a favourable audience for any matter which he had to propose.—"More have I not to say, my lords, but that as St. Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen to death, and as they are both now saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever; so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray, that though your lordships have now here on earth been judges to my condemnation, we may, nevertheless, hereafter cheerfully meet in heaven, in everlasting salvation."*

Sir W. Kingston, "his very dear friend," constable of the Tower, as, with tears running down his cheeks, he conducted his prisoner from Westminster, condoled with sir T. More, who endeavoured to assuage the sorrow of his friend by the consolations of religion. The same gentleman said afterwards to Roper,—"I was ashamed of myself when I found my heart so feeble, and his so strong."

Margaret Roper, his good angel, watched for his landing at the Tower wharf. "After his blessing upon her knees reverently received, without care of herself, pressing in the midst of the throng, and the guards that

* Roper, p. 90.

were about him with halberts and bills, she hastily ran to him, and openly, in sight of them all, embraced and kissed him. He gave her again his fatherly blessing. After separation she, all ravished with the entire love of her dear father, suddenly turned back again, ran to him as before, took him about the neck, and divers times kissed him most lovingly,—a sight which made many of the beholders weep and mourn." *

Thus tender was the heart of the admirable woman who had at the same time the greatness of soul to strengthen her father's fortitude, by disclaiming the advice for which he, having mistaken her meaning, had meekly rebuked her, to prefer life to right.

On the 14th of June, he was once more examined by four civilians in the Tower. "He was asked, first, whether he would obey the king as *supreme head of the church of England on earth immediately under Christ?* to which he said, that he could make no answer. Secondly, whether he would consent to the king's marriage with queen Anne, and *affirm the marriage with the lady Catharine to have been unlawful?* To which he answered that he did never speak nor meddle against the same; and, thirdly, whether he is not bound to answer the said question, and to recognise the *headship as aforesaid?* To which he said, that he could make no answer." †

It is evident that these interrogatories, into which some terms peculiarly objectionable to More were now for the first time inserted, were contrived for the sole purpose of reducing the illustrious victim to the option of uttering a lie or of suffering death. The conspirators against him might, perhaps, have a faint idea that they had at length broken his spirit. If he persisted, they hoped that he might be represented as bringing destruction on himself by his own obstinacy.

Such, however, was his calm and well-ordered mind, that he said and did nothing to provoke his fate. Had

* Roper, p. 90.
† English Works, 1458. Printed, London, 1557; and Roper, p. 92.

he given affirmative answers, he would have sworn falsely: he was the martyr of veracity. He perished only because he was sincere. On Monday, the 5th of July, 1535, he wrote a farewell letter to Margaret Roper, with his usual materials of coal. It contained blessings to all his children by name, with a kind remembrance even to one of Margaret's maids. Adverting to their last interview, on the quay, he says, — "I never liked your manner towards me better than when you kissed me last; for I love when daughterly love and dear charity have no leisure to look to worldly courtesy."

On Tuesday, the 6th of July (St. Thomas's eve), 1535, sir Thomas Pope, "his singular good friend," came to him early with a message from the king and council, to say that he should die before nine o'clock of the same morning. "The king's pleasure," said Pope, "is that you shall not use many words." — "I did purpose," answered More, "to have spoken somewhat, but I will conform myself to the king's commandment, and I beseech you to obtain from him that my daughter Margaret may be present at my burial." — "The king is already content that your wife, children, and other friends shall be present thereat." The lieutenant brought him to the scaffold, which was so weak that it was ready to fall, on which he said, merrily, "Master lieutenant, I pray you see me safe up, and for my coming down let me shift for myself." When he laid his head on the block he desired the executioner to wait till he had removed his beard, for that had never offended his highness.

He has been censured by some for such levities at the moment of death. These are censorious cavils, which would not be worthy of an allusion if they had not occasioned some sentences of as noble reflection, and beautiful composition, as the English language contains. "The innocent mirth, which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. His death was of a piece with his life; there was nothing in it new, forced, or affected. He did not look upon the severing

his head from his body as a circumstance which ought to produce any change in the disposition of his mind; and as he died in a fixed and settled hope of immortality, he thought any unusual degree of sorrow and concern improper." *

According to the barbarous practice of laws which vainly struggle to carry their cruelty beyond the grave, the head of sir Thomas More was placed on London bridge. His darling daughter, Margaret, had the courage to procure the head to be taken down, that she might exercise her affection by continuing to look on a head so dear. Carrying her love beyond the grave, she desired that it might be buried with her when she died, which was about nine years after the fate of her father. The remains of this precious relic are said to have been since observed in the burial place, lying on what had been her bosom. Her male descendants appear to have been soon extinct. Her descendants through females are probably numerous. † This admirable woman resembled her father in mind, in manner, in the features and expression of her countenance, and in her form and gait. Her learning was celebrated throughout Christendom: it is seldom that literature wears a more agreeable aspect than when it becomes a bond of union between such a father and such a daughter. His eldest son, John, married Anne Crisacre, the heiress of an estate at Barnborough, near Doncaster, still held by his posterity through females. ‡ The mansion of the Mores still subsists there. The last male descendant of sir Thomas More, was Thomas More, a jesuit, who was principal of the college of jesuits at Bruges, and died at Bath in 1795, having survived his famous order, and, according to the appearances of that time, his ancient religion; as if the family of More were one of the many ties which may be traced through the interval of two centuries and a

* Spectator, No. 349.

† One of them, Mr. James Hinton Baverstock, inserted his noble pedigree from Margaret, in 1819, in a copy of More's English Works, at this moment before me.

‡ Hunter's South Yorkshire, pp. 374, 375.

half between the revolutions of religion and those of government.

The letters and narratives of Erasmus diffused the story of More's fate throughout Europe. Cardinal Pole bewailed it with elegance and feeling. It filled Italy, the most cultivated portion of Europe, with horror. Paulo Jovio called Henry a Phalaris, though we shall in vain look in the story of Phalaris, or of any other real or legendary tyrant, for a victim worthy of being compared to More. The English ministers throughout Europe were regarded with averted eyes as the agents of a monster. At Venice, Henry, after this deed, was deemed capable of any crimes. He was believed there to have murdered Catharine, and to be about to murder his daughter Mary.* The catholic zeal of Spain, and the resentment of the Spanish people against the oppression of Catharine, quickened their sympathy with More, and aggravated their detestation of Henry. Mason, the envoy at Valladolid, thought every pure Latin phrase too weak for More, and describes him by a phrase as contrary to the rules of that language as "thrice greatest †" would be to the idiom of ours. When intelligence of his death was brought to the emperor Charles V., he sent for sir T. Elliot, the English embassador, and said to him, "My lord embassador, we understand that the king your master has put his wise counsellor sir Thomas More to death." Elliot, abashed, made answer that he understood nothing thereof. "Well," said the emperor, "it is too true; and this we will say, that if we had been master of such a servant, we should rather have lost the best city in our dominions than have lost such a worthy counsellor." "Which matter," says Roper, in the concluding words of his beautiful narrative, "was by sir T. Elliot told to myself, *my wife*, to Mr. Clement and his wife, and to Mr. Heywood and his wife." ‡

* Ellis's Letters.

† "Ter maximus ille Morus."—*Ellis.*

‡ Instead of Heywood, perhaps we ought to read "Heron?" In that case the three daughters of sir Thomas More would be present. Mrs. Roper was the eldest, Mrs. Clement the second, and Cecilia Heron the youngest.

Of all men nearly perfect, sir Thomas More had, perhaps, the clearest marks of individual character. His peculiarities, though distinguishing him from all others, were yet withheld from growing into moral faults. It is not enough to say of him that he was unaffected, that he was natural, that he was simple; so the larger part of truly great men have been. But there is something homespun in More which is common to him with scarcely any other, and which gives to all his faculties and qualities the appearance of being the native growth of the soil. The homeliness of his pleasantry purifies it from show. He walks on the scaffold clad only in his household goodness. The unrefined benignity with which he ruled his patriarchal dwelling at Chelsea enabled him to look on the axe without being disturbed by feeling hatred for the tyrant. This quality bound together his genius and learning, his eloquence and fame, with his homely and daily duties, bestowing a genuineness on all his good qualities, a dignity on the most ordinary offices of life, and an accessible familiarity on the virtues of a hero and a martyr, which silences every suspicion that his excellences were magnified.

He thus simply performed great acts, and uttered great thoughts, because they were familiar to his great soul. The charm of this inborn and homebred character seems as if it would have been taken off by polish. It is this household character which relieves our notion of him from vagueness, and divests perfection of that generality and coldness to which the attempt to paint a perfect man is so liable.

It will naturally, and very strongly, excite the regret of the good in every age, that the life of this best of men should have been in the power of him who was rarely surpassed in wickedness. But the execrable Henry was the means of drawing forth the magnanimity, the fortitude, and the meekness of More. Had Henry been a just and merciful monarch, we should not have known the degree of excellence to which human nature is capable of ascending. Catholics ought to see in More,

that mildness and candour are the true ornaments of all modes of faith. Protestants ought to be taught humility and charity from this instance of the wisest and best of men falling into, what they deem, the most fatal errors. All men, in the fierce contests of contending factions should, from such an example, learn the wisdom to fear lest in their most hated antagonist they may strike down a sir Thomas More; for assuredly virtue is not so narrow as to be confined to any party; and we have, in the case of More, a signal example that the nearest approach to perfect excellence does not exempt men from mistakes which we may justly deem mischievous. It is a pregnant proof, that we should beware of hating men for their opinions, or of adopting their doctrines because we love and venerate their virtues.

NOTE.

My literary occupations are of a nature which render it important to me that I should not be considered as answerable for the opinions of others concerning persons and events, which I may soon be called upon to treat in another form. I therefore wish to add here, though somewhat out of place, that I have not seen any portion of this collection but the above sketch, and that I know nothing of the contents of any other part of it.

Some particulars in the life of sir T. More I am obliged to leave to more fortunate enquirers. They are, indeed, very minute; but they may appear to others worthy of being ascertained, as they appeared to me, from their connection with the life of a wise and good man.

The records of the privy council are preserved only since 1540, so that we do not exactly know the date of his admission into that body. The time when he was knighted (then a mat-

ter of some moment) is not known. As the whole of his life passed during the great chasm in writs for election and returns of members of parliament, from 1477 to 1542, the places for which sir T. More sat, and the year of his early opposition to a subsidy, are unascertained; notwithstanding the obliging exertion of the gentlemen employed in the repositories at the Tower, and in the Rolls' chapel. We know that he was speaker of the house of commons in 1523 and 1524.* Browne Willis owns his inability to fix the place †; but he conjectured it to have been "either Middlesex, where he resided, or Lancaster, of which duchy he was chancellor." But that laborious and useful writer would not have mentioned the latter branch of his alternative, nor probably the former, if he had known that More was not chancellor of the Duchy till two years after his speakership.

An anecdote in More's chancellorship is connected with an English phrase, of which the origin is not quite satisfactorily explained. An attorney in his court, named Tubb, gave an account in court of a cause in which he was concerned, which the chancellor (who with all his gentleness loved a joke) thought so rambling and incoherent, that he said at the end of Tubb's speech, "This is a tale of a tub;" plainly showing that the phrase was then familiarly known.

The learned Mr. Douce has informed a friend of mine, that in Sebastian Munster's Cosmography, there is a cut of a ship, to which a whale was coming too close for her safety, and of the sailors throwing a tub to the whale, evidently to play with. The practice of throwing a tub or barrel to a large fish, to divert the huge animal from gambols dangerous to a vessel, is also mentioned in an old prose translation of The Ship of Fools.

These passages satisfactorily explain the common phrase of throwing a tub to a whale; but they do not account for leaving out the whale, and introducing the new word tale. The transition from the first phrase to the second is a considerable stride. It is not, at least, *directly* explained by Mr. Douce's citations; and no explanation of it has hitherto occurred which can be

* Rolls of Parliament in 1 Lords' Journal.
† Notit. Parliament, iii. 112.

supported by proof. It may be thought probable that, in process of time, some nautical wag compared a rambling story, which he suspected of being lengthened and confused, in order to turn his thoughts from a direction not convenient to the story teller, with the tub which he and his shipmates were wont to throw out to divert the whale from striking the bark, and perhaps said, "This tale is, like our tub to the whale." The comparison might have become popular; and it might gradually have been shortened into "a tale of a tub."

APPENDIX

TO

THE LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE CITY OF LONDON RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF SIR THOMAS MORE TO BE UNDER-SHERIFF OF LONDON, AND SOME APPOINTMENTS OF HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS AND OF HIS SUCCESSOR.

(27th September. A. D. 1496.)

"Commune consilium tentum die Martij Vicesimo Septimo die Septembr̃ Anno Regni Regis Henr̃ Septimi duo decimo.

"In isto Comũn Consilio Thomas Sall et Thomas Marowe confirmati sunt in Subvic̃ Civitati: London p anno sequent, &c."

(1497.)

"Comũne Consiliũ tent̃ die Lune xxv^{to} die Sept̃ anno Regni Reg̃s Henr̃ vii. xiij°.

"Isto die Thomas Marowe et Ed^{s} Dudley confirmat̃ sunt in Sub Vic̃ Cit^{s} London p anno seqũ."

(1498 & 1501.)

Similar entries of the confirmation of Thomas Marowe and Edward Dudley are made in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Henry VII., and at a court of aldermen, held on the

(1502.)

17th Nov. 18 Henry 7. the following entry appears:—

"Ad hanc Cur̃ Thomas Marowe uñs sub vicecomitū sponte resignat offiñ suū."

And at a Common Council held on the same day, is entered—

"In isto Communi Consilio Radūs adye Gentilman elect̃ est in unū Subvic̃ Civitats London loco Thoñe Marwe Gentilman qui illud officiū sponte resignavit, capiend̃ feod̃ consuet̃."

"Cōē Consiliū tent die Martis iij° die Septembris anno Regni Reg^{s} Henrici Octavi Secundo.

"Eodñ die Thoñs More Gent elect̃ est in unū Subvic̃ Civitats London loc̃ Ric̃ Broke Gent qui nup elect̃ fuit in Recordator London."

"Martis viij die Maii 6th Henry 8.
"Court of Aldermen.

"Yt ys agreed that Thomas More Gent oon of Undersheryfes of London which shall go ov̄ the Kings Ambasset in to flaunders shall occupie his Rowme and office by his sufficient Depute untyll his cūmyng home ageyn"

"Martis xj die Marcii 7 Henry VIIIth
"Court of Aldermen.

"Ye shall sweare that ye shall kepe the Secrets of this Courte and not to disclose eny thing ther spoken for the coēn welthe of this citie that myght hurt eny psone or brother of the seyd courte onles yt be spoken to his brothr or to other which in his conscience and discrec̄on shall thynk yt to be for the coēn welthe of this citie. So help you God."

" Jovis xiij die Marcii 7 Henry 8.
" Court of Aldermen.

" Itm̃ ad ista Cur̃ Thomas More and Wills̃ Shelley Subvice^cs Ci^ts London jur̃ sunt ad articlm supdcm̃ spect xj die marcii."

" Veñis 23 July, 10 Henry 8.
" Court of Aldermen.

" Ad istam Cur̃ Thomas More Gent un Subvic̃ Ci^ts in Comput̃ Pulletr London libẽ et sponte Surr̃ et resigñ officm̃ pdc̃m in manũ Maioris et Aldrõr."

" Coie Consiliu tent̃ die Venis xxiij die Julii anno regni regis Henrici Octavi decimo."

" Isto die Johes Pakyngton Gent admissus est in unũ subvic̃ Civitats London loco Thome More qui spont et libẽ resignavit Officiũ illud in Mañ Maioris aldrõr et Cõīs consilii. Et jur est &c."

CARDINAL WOLSEY.

1471—1530.

Thomas Cardinal Wolsey, the celebrated prime minister and favourite of Henry VIII., was born at Ipswich, in Suffolk, in 1471. According to Cavendish, his gentleman usher and biographer, he was "an honest poor man's son," under which vagueness of expression it is supposed an attempt is made to conceal the fact of his father having been a butcher.* That his father was a man at least of moderate wealth, is evident from his will, in which, among other legacies, he bequeaths "all his land and tenements" in the parish of St. Nicholas, and his "free and bond lands" in St. Stoke, to his widow; and, indeed, may be inferred from the circumstance of his son's entering the university of Oxford at a very early age. Wolsey was eminently favoured by nature in grace and beauty of person. Hence Shakspeare happily says of him, that he "was fashioned to much honour from the cradle." Of those incidents and circumstances of his early domestic life, which might throw light on the formation of his character, we unfortunately possess no information. Cavendish merely tells us, that from his childhood he was "very apt to learning;" and he himself used, in the very zenith of his fortune, to appeal, with laudable vanity, to his uni-

* There being no direct testimony to the fact of Wolsey's father having been a butcher, a foolish controversy has been waged concerning its probability. That he was a man of humble origin, — "an honest poor man," as Cavendish designates him, — is admitted on all hands; and it matters little what may have been his vocation, so far as the natal pretensions of his son to power and distinction are concerned. In the text we have assumed him to have been a butcher, because such was the belief of his contemporaries. He is distinctly alluded to as the butcher's dog in the satirical poem, erroneously ascribed, according to Mr. Singer (edition of Cavendish's Life), to Skelton; and by that dyslogistic epithet, Hall tells us, the populace usually characterised him. Luther calls him a butcher's son in his Colloquies; and Polydore Vergil also speaks of his father as a butcher. That his father died in easy circumstances, as stated in the text, is evident from his will, which the reader will find copied in the Appendix to Mr. Singer's excellent edition of Cavendish.

versity appellation of the *boy bachelor*, as the best proof of his early devotion to literature.

He was entered, most probably with a view to the church as a means of livelihood,—the church being then the great ladder of ambition to men of lowly birth,—of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he became a bachelor of arts at fifteen years of age, an occurrence which, as he himself told Cavendish, "was a rare thing, and seldom seen." He was also, at a very early age, elected fellow of Magdalen; and having been subsequently admitted to orders*, was appointed master of the preparatory school of his college. It is no less creditable to the head than to the heart of Wolsey that he was, from the commencement to the end of his career, imbued with a deep sense of the importance of the office of instructor of youth; and that in his school he displayed that perseverance, self-control, and unremitting vigilance, so essential to the business of education, and, it may be added, so indispensable to a penniless votary of ambition. During his residence at Magdalen College, he enjoyed the society of Erasmus, and, it is said, also of sir T. More.

An accident—as it turned out a fortunate one—prevented Wolsey from probably slumbering out his days in the cloisters of his alma mater. It happened that there were among his pupils three sons of Grey, marquis of Dorset (a collateral ancestor of Lady Jane Grey), who, owing to Henry's distrustfulness of the more ancient and wealthy nobility, even though they had been enemies of the house of York, then lived in rural retirement. During the Christmas holidays in 1499, Wolsey attended his "three honourable scholars" to their father's house; when he so gained upon the marquis by his fascinating powers of conversation, and by the

* At the date of his father's will, 31st of September, 1496, Wolsey was 25 years of age; and as it should seem was not yet in orders. "I wyll that *if* Thomas my son be a prest within a yer next after my decesse, than I wyll that he syng for me and my frends, be the space of a yer, and he for to have for his salary X more, and, *if* the seyd Thomas my son be not a prest than I wyll that another honest prest syng for me." The expression, however, implies that Wolsey was preparing to take orders.

progress which his pupils had made under his care, that that nobleman presented him to the rectory of Lymington in Somersetshire, a benefice in the gift of his family. Wolsey was in the 29th year of his age when he obtained this his first church preferment, for which he immediately relinquished his school and other collegiate appointments. Before, however, he left the university, he had given proofs of the love of literature, enterprising magnificence, and patronage of art, which were the virtues of his character; and had given occasion for the suspicion of that disregard of any quality in means except their immediate efficacy, which was his predominant and fatal vice. He was elected bursar of his college in 1498, at which time Erasmus was at Oxford; and he zealously concurred with that eminent scholar and genius (whose venal praise and dispraise of Wolsey are alike disgraceful to literature) in encouraging the study of the Greek writers, or, as it was then called, the new learning. At the same time Wolsey had erected the tower of Magdalen College chapel, known by the name of *Wolsey's Tower*, admired for the chaste simplicity and elegance of its architecture. The building of this tower involved Wolsey in pecuniary embarrassments which affected his reputation: for he is affirmed to have fraudulently applied the college funds, over which his office of bursar gave him some control, to the erection of the edifice; and is even reported to have used violent means to supply himself from the college treasury with the necessary money. The same taste for building attended and embarrassed him in every stage of his career: for no sooner was he settled in his "cure" than he set about repairing and beautifying the church and parsonage house; and to this day Esher, Christ Church college Oxford, and Hampton Court remain monuments of his wealth, love of magnificence, and genius for architecture. Never, indeed, was there a clergyman to whom the designation in the epigram — "*ut donem pastor et ædificem,*" — would more happily apply.

Wolsey remained at the rectory of Lymington but two years, during which an incident, curious in many of its bearings, occurred, that is not unworthy of our notice. Wolsey, being of a "free and sociable temper" (we quote the Biographia Britannica), went with some of his neighbours to a fair in an adjacent town, where his reverence is said to have got so drunk * as to create some disorders; for which he was punished by a sir Amyas Paulet, a neighbouring justice of the peace, with the "ignominious durance" of the public stocks of the town. This incident is interesting as illustrative of the manners of the times. The fact of a beneficed clergyman being thus held up to popular derision for an indecorum which many of his successors, even in the present day, might term an act of good fellowship, jars much with our notions of modern refinement. But it clearly shows the fruitfulness of the English soil for the seeds of the approaching Reformation; and proves that our catholic ancestors were not so priest-ridden, nor those priests so openly dissolute in their habits, as protestant zeal has repeatedly asserted. It is probable that Wolsey considered the affront to be aimed at the meanness of his birth; for, being of a temper less prone to resent injuries than contempt, he held it in angry recollection till fortune placed the offender within his power. Though prudence and magnanimity should have prevented his raking up the transaction from probable oblivion, Wolsey, on his becoming lord chancellor, sent for sir Amyas, and, sternly reprimanding him for his affront to the rector of Lymington, commanded him to remain within the bounds of the Temple during pleasure. The mode by which, after a confinement of five or six years, the unlucky justice at length mitigated the resentment of the vindictive minister is characteristic.

* The ground for this assertion is not known, and should seem to have no earlier authority than sir John Harrington. Cavendish professes ignorance of the cause which, "Sir, by your leave, made the knight so bold *to set the schoolmaster by the feet* during pleasure." It may be remarked that Storer, in his metrical life of Wolsey, represents him as the injured party. "Wrong'd by a knight for no desert of mine."—*See Singer's edition of Cavendish.*

He embellished the exterior of his residence, situate at the gate of the Middle Temple, with the arms, the hat, and other badges of distinction proper to Wolsey as a cardinal; and by this architectural offering to the haughty churchman's vanity obtained his liberty.

On leaving Lymington (the emoluments of the living of which he, however, did not resign for seven years after, having in the mean time obtained two papal dispensations for holding a plurality of benefices), Wolsey entered the service of Deane, archbishop of Canterterbury, as domestic chaplain, and soon after that of sir John Nanfar, treasurer of Calais, in the same capacity. The circumstance of his being thus received into the household of the archbishop of Canterbury abundantly disproves an assertion of some of his biographers, that, overwhelmed with shame for the ill odour in which his dissolute conduct at his cure of Lymington caused him to be held, he fled from it suddenly on the death, in 1501, of his patron, the marquis of Dorset; and is, indeed, hardly reconcileable with the scandalous tradition of his inebriety which we have just noticed. Though nominally but chaplain, sir John Nanfar, owing to the infirmity of old age, soon committed to him the whole management of his office, in which Wolsey gave so much satisfaction, that on the knight's return to England, he recommended him with such earnestness to the king, that Henry (VII.), ever willing to secure the services of men of practical ability, made him one of his chaplains.

This was the step to fortune which Wolsey had long panted for, and which he failed not speedily to improve, as it afforded full scope for the display of all those natural and acquired advantages in which he is admitted to have excelled. We have said that he was eminently favoured by nature in dignity of person and manner: he was, moreover, celebrated according to Cavendish for "a special gift of natural eloquence, with a filed tongue to pronounce the same; so that he was able with the same to persuade and allure all men to his purpose;" or,

as Shakspeare phrases it, he was "exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading." But he possessed endowments still more rare and valuable. Besides his great fluency of diction and practised self-command, Wolsey had a quick and correct perception of character and of the secret springs of action, and a singular power of shaping his conduct and conversation according to circumstances. Hence his extraordinary influence over those in power with whom he came in contact, which seemed to partake of the nature of fascination, and which was not the less paramount and enduring that it was unostentatious, and seemed to but blindly follow where, in fact, it guided. With the gay, youthful, and prodigal Henry VIII., Wolsey was betimes the magnificent courtier — the frolicsome companion — the state Mentor, and the commentator on Thomas Aquinas — the grave minister, and the mirthful favourite; while with the wary and calculating founder of the Tudor dynasty he was remarkable for the laborious assiduity, business-regularity, and monotonous steadiness of his habits. Such power of self-control, combined with his splendid abilities and insinuating address, could not fail to recommend Wolsey to Henry and his ministers, particularly when it was observed (as we are informed by Cavendish) that, after celebrating mass before the king, "he spent not forth the day in vain idleness, but gave his attendance upon those whom he thought to bear most rule in the council, to be most in favour with the king," — chiefly upon Fox, bishop of Winchester, the most influential of Henry's ministers, and sir Thomas Lovell *, master of the wards, both of whom early appreciated and proclaimed the value of the chaplain's civil services. To these statesmen Wolsey was indebted for all that a man of his abilities and ambition required — an opportunity of evincing his zeal and address in the king's immediate ser-

* Wolsey had not only the address and good qualities necessary to the acquisition of such friends, but also retained them to the last. The affection of bishop Fox is apparent in the last letter which he wrote to him; and sir Thomas Lovell's esteem was manifested at the close of his life: for he leaves him in his will "a standing cup of golde, and one hundred marks in golde." — *Singer's Notes.*

vice. The circumstances of the occasion on which he was thus employed, though well known to the readers of history, are worthy of being quoted with some fulness, as they were always referred to by Wolsey himself as the incident which opened the way to his subsequent greatness

Henry was at the time negotiating his intended marriage with Margaret, duchess dowager of Savoy, the emperor Maximilian's only daughter; and it was necessary to employ a person of great address to adjust with the emperor in person some delicate points connected with the marriage. Fox and Lovell joined in earnestly recommending Wolsey as the fittest person for the commission. "The king, giving ear unto them, and being a prince of excellent judgment and modesty, commanded them to bring his chaplain, whom they so much commended, before his grace's presence. At whose repair thither, to prove the wit of his chaplain, the king fell in communication with him, in matters of weight and gravity: and perceiving his wit to be very fine, thought him sufficient to be put in trust and authority with this embassy; and commanded him to prepare himself for this enterprise and journey, and for his depeche to repair to his grace, and his trusty counsellors aforesaid, of whom he should receive his commission and instructions; by means whereof," continues Cavendish, "he had then a due occasion to repair from time to time to the king's presence, who perceived him more and more to be a very wise man, and of a good entendement."

Wolsey, having thus satisfied the wary monarch of his competency, despatched his commission with a celerity which, notwithstanding the extraordinarily increased facilities of modern conveyance, may perhaps still be considered great, if not surprising. He left the king at Richmond at four o'clock on Sunday, went to Gravesend from London by water that evening in less than three hours, thence posted it to Dover, where he arrived next morning as the passage-boat was about to sail. By it he was conveyed over to Calais before noon, whence he got to Bruges, where Maximilian was staying, by Tues-

day morning. Wolsey obtained an immediate audience of the emperor, and pressed that his return might be expedited. He received his answer late in the evening, started from Bruges next morning, and arrived in Richmond the same night. On Thursday morning he attended at court, and threw himself at the king's feet. Henry, supposing he had protracted his departure, was displeased at seeing him, and began to reprove him for the dilatory execution of his orders: on which Wolsey, to the king's great surprise, presenting his letters of credence, replied, "If it may please your highness, I have already been with the emperor, and despatched your affairs, I trust, to your grace's contentation."—"But on second thoughts," said the king, "I found that somewhat was omitted in your orders, and have sent a messenger after you with fuller instructions."—"Yes, forsooth, sire," quoth Wolsey, "I encountered him yesterday by the way; and, having no understanding by your grace's letter of your pleasure therein, have notwithstanding been so bold, upon mine own discretion (perceiving that matter to be very necessary in that behalf), to despatch the same. And, forasmuch as I have exceeded your grace's commission, I most humbly require your gracious remission and pardon." * The king, pleased with the whole transaction, gave Wolsey his royal thanks, "for his good and speedy exploit," and commanded him to attend after dinner; when, says his biographer, he reported his embassy to the king in council with such a graceful deportment, and so eloquent language, that he received the utmost applause; all declaring him to be a person of such capacity and diligence that he deserved to be further employed. Henceforth Wolsey was regarded as on the road to power and fortune, being very soon after installed in the deanery of

* In his metrical life of Wolsey, Storer thus speaks of this expedition:—

"The Argonautic vessel never pass'd
With swifter course along the Colchian main,
Than my small bark, with fair and speedy blast,
Convey'd me forth, and re-convey'd again:
Thrice had Arcturus driven his restless wain,
And heaven's bright lamp the day had thrice revived,
From first departure till I last arrived."

Lincoln, then the most valuable benefice under a bishopric; to which were added the prebends of Stowe, Walton, and Brinhald. The death of Henry at this time (1509) alone prevented his receiving further marks of the royal favour.

Wolsey's introduction to the new king, Henry VIII., then in the bloom and promise of his youth, is usually attributed to his patron bishop Fox's jealousy of his rival, the earl of Surrey, the late king's high treasurer. It is said that the prelate, observing that lord Surrey had totally eclipsed him in favour, introduced Wolsey to the young prince, with the hope that he might rival Surrey in those arts which win and secure the attachment of the youthful heart, and yet be content to act in the cabinet a part subordinate to Fox himself. But he knew little of the workings of Wolsey's proud and aspiring mind when he calculated upon his resting satisfied in a subordinate capacity, while there existed the remotest possibility of his reaching a higher. In a very short time, by his extraordinary address, he not only supplanted Surrey in the royal favour, but also his patron Fox in the youthful monarch's trust and confidence. On the accession of Henry he was appointed king's almoner, an office which kept him in constant attendance upon the person of the monarch in his hours of relaxation, and which thereby enabled him to acquire such an ascendancy over the mind of Henry as was attributed to necromancy, and lasted for many years the wonder of Europe. Within a year after Henry's mounting the throne, he presented his almoner with the splendid mansion and gardens of his father's ravenous but too faithful minister Empson (who had just been most illegally attainted at the shrine of popularity), which adjoined his own palace of Bridewell, in Fleet Street; and appointed him rector of Turrington, in Exeter, canon of Windsor, registrar and soon after chancellor of the order of the Garter, reporter of the proceedings in the star-chamber, and member of the privy council: the prebend of Bugthorp and deaneries of York and Hereford were added next year.

The means by which Wolsey acquired and retained his extraordinary ascendancy over Henry are such as might be inferred from his quick insight into character, and power of assimilating his discourse and actions accordingly. The language of Cavendish on this point is unusually graphic:—

"In whom the king conceived such a loving fantasy, and in especial for that he was the most earnest and readiest among all the council to advance the king's only will and pleasure, without *any respect to the case:* the king, therefore, perceived him to be a meet instrument for the accomplishment of his devised will and pleasure, called him more near unto him, and esteemed him so highly, that his estimation and favour put all other ancient counsellors out of their accustomed favour that they were in before; insomuch that the king committed all his will and pleasure unto his disposition and order. Who wrought so all his matters, that *all his endeavour was only to satisfy the king's mind; knowing right well, that it was the very vein and right course to bring him to high promotion.* The king was young and lusty, disposed all to mirth and pleasure, and to follow his desire and appetite, nothing minding to travail in the busy affairs of this realm: the which the almoner perceiving very well, took upon him, therefore, to disburden the king of so weighty a charge and troublesome business; putting the king in comfort that he shall not need to spare any time of his pleasure for any business that necessarily happens in the council, as long as he being there, and having the king's authority and commandment, doubted not to see all things sufficiently furnished and perfected; the which would first make the king privy to all such matters as should pass through their hands, before he would proceed to the finishing or determining of the same, whose mind and pleasure he would fulfil and follow to the uttermost, wherewith the king was wonderly pleased. And whereas the other ancient counsellors would, according to the office of good coun-

sellors, divers times persuade the king to have sometime an intercourse in to the council, there to hear what was done in weighty matters, the which pleased the king nothing at all, for he loved nothing worse than to be constrained to do any thing contrary to his royal will and pleasure; and that knew the almoner very well, having a secret intelligence of the king's natural inclination, and so fast as the other counsellors advised the king to leave his pleasures and to attend to the affairs of his realm, so busily did the almoner persuade him to the contrary; which delighted him much, and caused him to have the greater affection and love to the almoner."

Henry, owing to his father's jealous care to remove him from the inclination and means of acquiring a knowledge of public business, had spent his youth in the pursuits of literature and scholastic theology, and had acquired a relish for both. In Wolsey he found at once a fellow-student and a master, who encouraged his propensity with a "most filed tongue and ornate eloquence." Henry was prone to frolic, and the usual excesses and amusements of youth and high spirits, and found in his reverend expounder of the subtleties of the Thomists, not a check nor a restraint, but one who took the lead in every entertainment, who sported *, jested, sang, and even danced, unmindful or regardless of the decorum sought for in a clergyman. No doubt this unbecoming pliancy of conduct would, as it eventually did in the king's more adult years, lessen his respect for his favourite; but youth is unsuspicious and confiding, and easily won and deceived by the flattery of apparent sympathy. Wolsey, moreover, was too good a judge of human nature to suppose that Henry's vigorous understanding would be content to while away his time be-

* "He (Wolsey) came unto the king and waited upon him, and was no man so obsequious and serviceable, and in all games and sports the first and next at hand, and as a captain to courage others, and a gay finder out of new pastimes to obtain favour with all. He spied out the nature and disposition of the king's playfellows, and of all that were great, and whom he spied meet for his purpose him he flattered and made faithful with great purposes."—*Tyndale, Prac. Prel.* To the same effect writes Polydore Vergil.—See *Turner's Modern History of England.*

tween court revels and Thomas Aquinas; and therefore, in the intervals of amusement, introduced business, and warily insinuated those maxims of conduct which he was desirous his master should adopt. He observed to him, that while he intrusted his affairs to his father's counsellors, he had indeed the advantage of employing men of wisdom and experience, but men who owed not their promotion to his own personal favour, and who scarcely thought themselves accountable to him for the exercise of their authority; that by the factions, and cabals, and jealousies, which had long prevailed among them, they more obstructed the advancement of his affairs than they promoted it by the knowledge which age and practice had conferred upon them; that while he thought proper to pass his time in those pleasures to which his age and royal fortune invited him, and in those studies which would in time enable him to sway the sceptre with absolute authority, his best system of government would be to intrust his authority into the hands of some *one person*, who was the creature of his will, and who could entertain no view but that of promoting his service; and that if the minister had also the same relish for pleasure with himself, and the same taste for literature, he could more easily, at intervals, account to him for his whole conduct, and introduce his master gradually into the knowledge of public business; and thus, without tedious restraint or application, initiate him in the science of government.* The bait took; Henry, without perceiving his design, entered into all his views, and Wolsey became sole and absolute minister, with a more uncontrolled authority than any other British subject has ever possessed. This happened in 1512, three years after the accession of Henry.

The public life of Wolsey from this time properly belongs to general history; or, rather, we should perhaps be more correct in saying, that the history of England from the year 1512 to 1529 is nothing more than the

* Hume's History of England, on the authority of Lord Herbert and Polydore Vergil. The historian is too partial to Wolsey's memory.

history of Wolsey's insatiable ambition. He soon constituted himself the sole avenue to Henry's favour*, and suitors of every rank found it expedient to ensure his mediation by flattery and presents, which showered in on him so fast, that, says Cavendish, "he wanted nothing either to please his fantasy or to enrich his coffers, fortune so smiled upon him." The two rival ministers, Surrey, then duke of Norfolk, and Fox, who perceived too late that the servant whom he had advanced had become his master, quailed before his ascendancy. The former, not long after, finding that the king's extravagance far outran his revenue, was glad to resign his office of treasurer, and retire from public life. Wolsey immediately took upon himself the vacant office, and, by the most arbitrary aggressions of authority, contrived to supply his master with the means of indulging his prodigality and love of magnificence. Fox too withdrew from court, and thought it prudent to confine himself for the remainder of his days to the care of his diocese.

* So early as 1513, the queen (Catharine) corresponded with him confidentially. "Maister Almoner, for the payne ye take remembring to write to me soo often, I thanke you for it w^h al my hert." In 1514, Mary, the sister of Henry, then queen of France, addresses her "lovynge frend the archebischop of Yorke," to use his influence with the king to permit lady Guldeford to reside with her in France. The letter written to Wolsey by Mary on her becoming a widow is worth quoting at length.

"My nanne good Lord, I recommend me to you (sometimes written *zou*) and thankyng you for yor kynde and lovyng letter, dysyryng you of yor good contenance and good lessones that you hath gyffen to me; my lord, I pray you as my trust ys in you, for to remember me to the king my brother, for sowche causses and bepynes as I have for to do; for as now I have no nother to put my trust in but the kyng my brother *and you*. And as yt shall ples the kyng my brother and hys counsell, I wil be hordered. And so I pray you, my lord, to show hys grace, seying that the kyng (Louis XII.) my howsbande ys departed to God, of whos sole God pardon. And wher as you avyse me that I shulde macke no promas, my lord, I trust the kyng my brother *and you* wole not reckon in me soche chyldhode. I trust I have so hordered my selffe so sens that I came better, and so I trust to conteneu. Yff there be any thynge that I may do for you, I wolde be glade for to do yt in thys partes. I shal be glade to do yt for you. No more to you at this time but Jesus preserve you.

"Wretten at Pares, the x day of January, 1515,

"By your lowyng
"frende MARY,
"Quene of France."

"To my Lorde of Yorke.

In the same tone of respect and confidence Margaret, queen of Scotland, Henry's eldest sister, writes,—"My lorde, I thynke ryght longe vyhil I speke vyth you; for next the kyng's grace my most trust is in you, and you may doo me most good of any."—*Ellis's Historical Letters*, First Series, vol. i.

Brandon, the duke of Suffolk, who was married to Henry's sister, "affected also to live in privacy," from disgust at Wolsey's ascendancy. Thus was he left, without a rival, to enjoy the whole power and favour of his sovereign.

It would, however, be an error to impute all this upstart ascendancy to the influence of Wolsey's personal character. Much of it was owing to the political circumstances to which the recent changes in the succession to the throne gave birth. The Tudor dynasty was an usurpation: its founder was an upstart, and therefore regarded with a jealous eye by such of the ancient and more wealthy nobility as had escaped the slaughter of the wars of the Roses. Hence it was the constant purpose—alike congenial with the temper, and suitable to the policy, of the princes of the house of Tudor—to restrain the ascendancy, and as much as possible destroy the political influence, of the ancient nobility. As might be expected from the sordid calculating disposition of the first and ablest of these princes, Henry VII. employed, as the chief means to this end, fine and confiscation; by which he at once gratified his ruling passion of avarice, and impoverished and intimidated those great families, of whose restless ambition, hereditary affection to the house of York, or jealousy of his usurped title, he was distrustful. The more arrogant and impetuous, and therefore less cautious and dissembling, temper of his son and successor, made him hesitate less in shedding the blood of his highest and most illustriously descended nobles; and we find that towards the close of his sanguinary reign his jealousy of every great man became so ferocious, that not all the services to the Tudor family of the house of Howard, nor the ties of blood, nor the strong feelings of friendship, could save the life of the high-minded earl of Surrey, whose only crime was the possession of those talents and virtues which have secured him the admiration of posterity; and that nought but the timely death of the tyrant himself snatched from the same scaffold

the father of that accomplished nobleman, the duke of Norfolk, notwithstanding his long-tried loyalty, numerous personal claims upon the gratitude of his sovereign, and, what perhaps should have availed him more, his ignominious servitude to that sovereign's will. A natural result of this policy of depressing the nobles was the placing the management of public affairs in the hands of those who had no other recommendation to the monarch's favour than their abilities and devoted zeal in his service. To princes so greedy of absolute power as those of the house of Tudor, and so consequently jealous of all who might prove obstacles to their attainment of it, no ministers could be more agreeable than those who were the mere creatures of their will, and who, as such, would not for their own sakes entertain any design not tending to promote the views of him or her to whom they felt they were wholly indebted for their political, and, as it might happen, even natural existence. Previously to the era of the Reformation, such ministers were usually furnished from the ranks of the clergy, who held in their own hands the learning of the times, and who were themselves drawn, without distinction of birth, from all classes of the community.

The church, as we before remarked, was in those days what the bar is at present, the ladder by which the lowly born might ascend to political eminence; of which state of things a more remarkable instance need not be quoted than the fact of sir Thomas More's being distinguished as the first layman who for centuries had filled the office of chancellor. Hence the facilities to Wolsey's elevation, which show that his humble origin was by no means a bar to his advancement.

It is not possible to furnish a consistent narrative of Wolsey's life without touching upon those great political events of the early part of the 16th century which more properly belong to the historian. A rapid glance must, however, suffice.

At the accession of Henry VIII. Italy was the centre of all the wars and negotiations of the European princes;

and the great object of these wars and negotiations was the preserving what was then, for the first time, clearly understood — the balance of power between the great monarchies. Never did this balance seem better secured, nor the general tranquillity more likely to be long maintained, than when Julius II., the most warlike and enterprising of the successors of St. Peter, united the kings of Europe against the republic of Venice by the League of Cambray. Having humbled that proud republic, the ambitious pontiff next directed his energies to the nobler design of freeing Italy from the yoke of the barbarians — the title by which all foreigners were then designated by the Italians.

The expelling the French out of their new conquest of Milan was the first object of his ambition; and for that purpose he solicited the military aid of England, by sending Henry a sacred rose, perfumed with musk, with a letter stating that it had been blessed by his own hands, and anointed with holy oil; and by holding out hopes to him that the title of *Most Christian King,* considered the most precious jewel in the crown of France, should be the reward of his services. Julius obtained in Henry a willing ally; for he was then in the bright morning of his youth, — sanguine, inexperienced, sincere, chivalrous, and inspired at the same time with an earnest zeal to protect the pope against the "sacrilegious aggression" of the king of France, and to assert his own claims upon that kingdom; and thus indulge the national enmity of his subjects, and his own passion for military renown. War having been duly declared against Louis, Henry, surrounded by the martial portion of his subjects, who were eager to display their valour on a foreign soil*, and thus emulate the fame of their ancestors' continental victories, and attended by Wolsey, as victualler of the forces, set sail from Dover in June, 1512. The victory

* Machiavel remarks upon this invasion, that "though England had had no wars for thirty years before, and had neither officers nor soldiers who had ever seen a battle, they ventured to attack a kingdom where the officers were excellent, and the soldiers very good, and who had been trained up for several years together in the Italian wars."— *His. Liv. quoted by Mr. Turner.*

of Guingette, better known by the name of the "battle of spurs," and the successful sieges of Terouenne and Tournay, though of little utility to England, gratified the warlike ardour of its monarch and his subjects, and confirmed the idea entertained of his power by the contemporary princes of Europe. The first opportunity that presented itself during the campaign of rewarding his favourite was eagerly embraced by Henry. When Tournay had surrendered to his arms, he found the bishopric not entirely filled up. The bishop had lately died; a new one had been elected by the chapter, but not installed. The king bestowed the administration of the see on Wolsey, and put him in immediate possession of its revenues. The new pastor immediately tendered, on the part of his flock, an oath of allegiance to the king of England. On his return to England, the see of Lincoln, just vacant by the death of bishop Smith, was added to Wolsey's honours and revenues.

Wolsey's talents, as he rose in power, unfolded themselves in all their native splendour and versatility; but in a still greater degree did prosperity develope and mature the vices of his character. Each step in his ascent to power seemed but to swell his arrogance, while each addition to his large revenues but made him more rapacious. Scarcely was the ceremony of his consecration at Lincoln over than he laid hold of the goods belonging to his predecessor; and Cavendish tells us, that he has frequently seen, with shame, some of the stolen furniture of the late bishop in the house of his master. As might be supposed, such conduct, aggravated by his haughty deportment, made him many enemies*; but their

* Erasmus speaks of him as "non passim comis aut facilis." In a letter published in Fidde's Collection from a sir T. Allen, a priest to the earl of Shrewsbury, we have a striking instance of his haughty insolence of deportment. "I delivered your letter with the examination to my lord cardinal at Guildford, when he commanded me to wait on him to the court. I followed him to the court, and there gave attendance, and could have no answer. Upon Friday last he came thence to Hampton Court, where he lieth. The morrow after I besought his grace that I might know his pleasure. I could have no answer. Upon Monday last, as he walked in the park at Hampton, I besought his grace I might know if he would command me any service. He *was not content with me that I spoke to him.* The Sunday before I delivered the letter which R. Leid brought. I can have no

ill-will was construed either as envy of his sudden elevation, or as an insolent reflection upon the discrimination of the king, and served, in either case, but to rivet him faster in Henry's confidence. Wolsey himself was too well acquainted with the king's temper, and, as we have before observed, too artful, not to conceal the absolute ascendant he had acquired; and while he secretly directed all public councils, he ever pretended a blind submission to the will and authority of his sovereign. In the same year that he was promoted to the see of Lincoln, Bambridge, archbishop of York, died, and the vacant see was at once made over to Wolsey. Nor was he content with the honour of the archbishopric of York; for, besides the rich see of Tournay, he farmed on his own terms the bishoprics of Bath, Worcester, and Hereford, filled by foreigners, who gladly compounded for the indulgence of residing abroad, by yielding up a large share of their English incomes. He held in commendam the abbey of St. Albans and many other church preferments, and was even allowed to unite with the see of York, first, that of Durham, and next that of Winchester. Even this is not the list of his new sources of wealth and influence. Wolsey was promoted to the archbishopric of York in October, 1514. In the ensuing September he was, with a view to purchasing his influence with the king, created a cardinal by pope Leo X.; and in three months after, upon the resignation of archbishop Norham, made lord high chancellor of England. "In fact," says the historian, "there seemed to be no end to his acquisitions." Neither was his influence nor were his revenues, great as they were, confined to these numerous and munificent proofs of the favour of his sovereign. He was courted with incredible attention and obsequiousness by the great monarchs of Europe

answer to neither of the letters; so that who shall be suitor to him may have no business but to attend upon his pleasure. He that shall do so has needful to be a wiser man than I am. I had rather your lordship commanded me to Rome than deliver him letters and bring answer to the same. When he walks in the park, he will *suffer no servant to come nigh* unto him, but commands them away as far as one may well shoot an arrow." — *Fiddes' Lord Herbert's Life of Henry VIII.*

who sought the friendship and alliance of the court of England.* The youthful, enterprising, and chivalrous Francis I., and his great rival the emperor Charles V., vied with each other by bribes and flattery to work upon his growing avarice and ambition. The former employed Bonnivet, the most skilful of his courtiers, to win him over to his interest; and, besides settling on him a yearly pension of 12,000 livres, laboured with incessant assiduity to secure his friendship by every mark of respect and confidence, and by every possible expression of regard, bestowing on him, in all his letters, the honourable appellations of father, tutor, and governor. Charles, on the other hand, soon after his accession to the throne of Castile, sought to ingratiate himself with Wolsey, by settling on him a pension of 3000 livres; to which he added 7000 ducats more on his visit to England, for the purpose of detaching his "good friend" and his "most dear friend" (as he designated the cardinal) from the interests of Francis.

Great as was the revenue which Wolsey derived from these exorbitant acquisitions, it did not keep pace with the magnificence of his household, and the ostentatious state and pomp with which, under colour of exacting respect to religion and the legal tribunals, he supported his dignity as cardinal and lord chancellor. His domestic establishments were on a royal scale, his train consisting of not less than 500 servants†, of whom many, according to the usage of the times, were knights and gentlemen, and sons of noblemen. Three great tables were daily laid out in the cardinal's hall for this nu-

* Even the doge of Venice addressed him as an integral portion of the royal power. See Fiddes. And Bellay speaks as an eye-witness, when he tells us that "in all things the cardinal was honoured like the king's person, and sat always at his right hand. In all places where the king's arms were put the cardinal's had the same rank, so that in every honour they were equal." *Mem.* v. 18. p. 42. quoted by Turner. But it was reserved for the university of Oxford to outstrip all precedent in its base obsequiousness, by repeatedly addressing Wolsey as "your majesty:" "Consultissima *tua majestas;—reverendissima majestas;*—inaudita majestatis tuæ benignitas;—*vestra illa sublimis et longe reverendissima majestas.*"

† Lord Burghley, in a state paper to queen Elizabeth about favourites, says of Wolsey, that he had a family equal to that of a great prince. There were in it, he says, one earl, nine barons, and about a thousand knights. Burnet gives the same number; but we follow Cavendish in the text.

merous retinue, each presided over by a dignitary bearing a white staff of office. Conformably with the custom of the age, many of the nobility placed their children in his family as a place of education; and, for the purpose of winning his favour, allowed them to act as his servants. They boarded, however, at a separate table, thence called the "mess of lords," and had numerous menials to attend them; the earl of Derby and lord Henry Percy (the lover of Anne Boleyn) having five each, and the other young noble inmates not less than two. The kitchen of the cardinal was on the same magnificent scale, being ruled over by a master cook, "who went about daily in garments of damask satin, wearing a chain of gold round his neck," as an emblem of his authority and importance. There was a regular master of the horse presiding over the stable department, with a suitable revenue of yeomen, grooms, sumpter-men, muleteers, saddlers, and farriers. The barges, gardens, larder, scalding-house, wafery, bakehouse, scullery, buttery, pantry, ewery, chandlery, cellar, laundry, and wardrobe of beds, had each their distinct grooms, yeomen, and pages, in suitable numbers. The personal servants of the cardinal amounted to forty-six, and formed, with his chaplains and attendants upon the ceremony of the mass, a body of not less than 143 persons. His procession in public was still more imposing, and more indicative of that love of the externals, and parade of the trappings of dignity, "the tailor's heraldry," as it has been quaintly characterised, remarkable in men of lowly origin. It would appear to have been his aim to dazzle the eyes of the populace by the gorgeous lustre of his garments, and the splendid costly embroidery of his equipage and liveries, and thereby reconcile them to his newly acquired but unlimited authority. He was the first clergyman in England that wore silk and gold, not only on his habit, but also on his saddles and the trappings of his horses. A priest, the tallest and most comely he could find, carried before him a pillar of silver, on whose top was placed a cross: but not satisfied with this

parade, to which he thought himself entitled as cardinal, he provided another priest of equal stature and beauty, who marched along, bearing the cross of York * even in the diocese of Canterbury.† It is in allusion to this circumstance that Cavendish, in his metrical piece of autobiography, makes Wolsey say: —

> " My crossis twayne of silver, long and greate,
> That dayly before me were carried hyghe,
> Upon great horses, opynly in the streett;
> And massie pillers gloryouse to the eye,
> With pollaxes gylt, that no man durst come nyghe
> My presence, I was so pryncely to behold;
> Ridyng on my mule trapped in silver and in golde."

The ceremony of " high mass," so imposingly magnificent at this day in catholic countries, was performed by Wolsey in a style of splendour which astonished even in that age of pomp and ceremony. His attendants were bishops and abbots; and such was his haughtiness, that, says Hall, " he made dukes and earls to serve him with wine, and to hold the bason and the lavatories,"—offices which catholic superstition rendered honourable, if not sacred.

His daily procession to the court of chancery was equally ostentatious, and jarring with our modern notions of the deportment becoming a judge and a clergyman. The reader, accustomed to the plain attire and dignified simplicity of bearing of our Eldons and Broughams and Tenterdens, as they wend their way, generally on foot, to Westminster Hall, and unattended, will be amused by the contrast afforded by Wolsey's love of pageantry. We shall quote the narrative of Cavendish, for its minute and graphic fidelity:—

" Now will I declare unto you his order in going to Westminster Hall, daily, in the term season. First, be-

* The people, in that spirit which so much accelerated the Reformation, on this occasion made merry with the cardinal's ostentation; saying, they were now sensible that not less than two crucifixes would be sufficient for the expiation of his sins and offences.

† Mr. Hume and others err in supposing that Wolsey's taking precedency of the archbishop of Canterbury was an usurpation dictated by his arrogance. As cardinal, he had the right of usage to precede him; the point having been mooted in the case of a cardinal Kemp, also archbishop of York, preceding the then archbishop of Canterbury, and decided by the pope in favour of the cardinal.

fore his coming out of his privy chamber, he heard most commonly every day two masses in his privy closet; and there then said his daily service with his chaplain: and as I heard his chaplain say, being a man of credence and of excellent learning, that the cardinal, what business or weighty matters soever he had in the day, he never went to his bed with any part of his divine service unsaid, yea, not so much as one collect; wherein I doubt not but he deceived the opinion of divers persons. And after mass he would return in his privy chamber again, and being advertised of the furniture of his chambers without, with noblemen, gentlemen, and other persons, would issue out into them, appareled all in red, in the habit of a cardinal; which was either of fine scarlet, or else of crimson satin, taffety, damask, or caffa, the best that he could get for money; and upon his head a round pillion, with a noble of black velvet set to the same in the inner side; he had also a tippet of fine sables about his neck; holding in his hand a very fair orange, whereof the meat or substance within was taken out, and filled up again with the part of a sponge, wherein was vinegar, and other confections against the pestilent airs; the which he most commonly smelt unto, passing among the press, or else when he was pestered with many suitors. There was also borne before him, first, the great seal of England, and then his cardinal's hat, by a nobleman or some worthy gentleman, right solemnly, bareheaded. And as soon as he was entered into his chamber of presence, where there was attending his coming to await upon him to Westminster Hall, as well noblemen and other worthy gentlemen, as noblemen and gentlemen of his own family; thus passing forth with two great crosses of silver borne before him; with also two great pillars of silver, and his pursuivant at arms with a great mace of silver gilt. Then his gentlemen ushers cried, and said, "On, my lords and masters, on before; make way for my lord's grace!" Thus passed he down from his chamber through the hall; and when he came to the hall door, there was attendant for him his mule, trapped all

together in crimson velvet, and gilt stirrups. When he was mounted, with his cross bearers, and pillar bearers, also upon great horses trapped with [fine] scarlet. Then marched he forward, with his train and furniture in manner as I have declared, having about him four footmen, with gilt pollaxes in their hands; and thus he went until he came to Westminster Hall door. And there alighted, and went after this manner, up through the hall into the chancery; howbeit he would most commonly stay awhile at a bar, made for him, a little beneath the chancery [on the right hand], and there commune some time with the judges, and some time with other persons. And that done he would repair into the chancery, sitting there till eleven of the clock, hearing suitors, and determining of divers matters. And from thence he would divers times go into the star-chamber, as occasion did serve; where he spared neither high nor low, but judged every estate according to their merits and deserts."

Cavendish, whose style warms when he has a pageant to describe, next proceeds to give us an account of the mode in which the "king's majesty" was wont to amuse himself at the mansion of the cardinal. The passage is curiously illustrative of the chivalrous manner of the monarch and the age:—

"And when it pleased the king's majesty, for his recreation, to repair unto the cardinal's house, as he did divers times in the year, at which time there wanted no preparations, or goodly furniture, with viands of the finest sort that might be provided for money or friendship. Such pleasures were then devised for the king's comfort and consolation, as might be invented, or by man's wit imagined. The banquets were set forth, with masks and mummeries, in so gorgeous a sort, and costly manner, that it was a heaven to behold. There wanted no dames, or damsels, meet or apt to dance with the maskers, or to garnish the place for the time, with other goodly disports. Then was there all kind of music and harmony set forth, with excellent voices both of men and children. I have seen the king suddenly come in thither

in a mask, with a dozen of other maskers, all in garments like shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine crimson satin paned, and caps of the same, with visors of good proportion of visnomy; their hairs, and beards, either of fine gold wire, or else of silver, and some being of black silk; having sixteen torch bearers, besides their drums, and other persons attending upon them, with visors, and clothed all in satin, of the same colours. And at his coming, and before he came into the hall, ye shall understand, that he came by water to the water gate, without any noise; where, against his coming, were laid charged many chambers, and at his landing they were all shot off, which made such a rumble in the air that it was like thunder. It made all the noblemen, ladies, and gentlewomen to muse what it should mean coming so suddenly, they sitting quietly at a solemn banquet; under this sort: First, ye shall perceive that the tables were set in the chamber of presence, banquet-wise covered, my lord cardinal sitting under the cloth of estate, and there having his service all alone; and then was there set a lady and a nobleman, or a gentleman and gentlewoman, throughout all the tables in the chamber on the one side, which were made and joined as it were but one table. All which order and device was done and devised by the lord Sands, lord chamberlain to the king; and also by sir Henry Guilford, comptroller to the king. Then immediately after this great shot of guns, the cardinal desired the lord chamberlain, and comptroller, to look what this sudden shot should mean, as though he knew nothing of the matter. They thereupon looking out of the windows into Thames, returned again, and showed him, that it seemed to them there should be some noblemen and strangers arrived at his bridge, as ambassadors from some foreign prince. With that, quoth the cardinal, 'I shall desire you, because ye can speak French, to take the pains to go down into the hall to encounter and to receive them, according to their estates, and to conduct them into this chamber, where they shall see us, and all these noble personages sitting

merrily at our banquet, desiring them to sit down with us, and to take part of our fare and pastime.' Then [they] went incontinent down into the hall, where they received them with twenty new torches, and conveyed them up into the chamber, with such a number of drums and fifes as I have seldom seen together at one time in any masque. At their arrival into the chamber, two and two together, they went directly before the cardinal where he sat, saluting him very reverently; to whom the lord chamberlain for them said, 'Sir, for as much as they be strangers, and can speak no English, they have desired me to declare unto your grace thus: they, having understanding of this your triumphant banquet, where was assembled such a number of excellent fair dames, could do no less, under the supportation of your good grace, but to repair hither to view as well their incomparable beauty, as for to accompany them at mumchance, and then after to dance with them, and so to have of them acquaintance. And, sir, they furthermore require of your grace licence to accomplish the cause of their repair.' To whom the cardinal answered, that he was very well contented they should so do. Then the maskers went first and saluted all the dames as they sat, and then returned to the most worthiest, and there opened a cup full of gold, with crowns, and other pieces of coin, to whom they set divers pieces to cast at. Thus in this manner perusing all the ladies and gentlewomen, and to some they lost, and of some they won. And thus done, they returned unto the cardinal, with great reverence, pouring down all the crowns in the cup, which was about two hundred crowns. 'At all,' quoth the cardinal, and so cast the dice, and won them all at a cast; whereat was great joy made. Then quoth the cardinal to my lord chamberlain, 'I pray you,' quoth he, 'show them that it seemeth me that there should be among them some noble man, whom I suppose to be much more worthy of honour to sit and occupy this room and place than I; to whom I would most gladly, if I knew him, surrender my place according to my duty.' Then

spake my lord chamberlain unto them in French, declaring my lord cardinal's mind, and they rounding him again in the ear, my lord chamberlain said to my lord cardinal, 'Sir, they confess,' quoth he, 'that among them there is such a noble personage, whom, if your grace can appoint him from the other, he is contented to disclose himself, and to accept your place most worthily.' With that the cardinal, taking a good advisement among them, at the last, quoth he, 'Me seemeth the gentleman with the black beard should be even he.' And with that he arose out of his chair, and offered the same to the gentleman in the black beard, with his cap in his hand. The person to whom he offered then his chair was sir Edward Neville, a comely knight of a goodly personage, that much more resembled the king's person in that mask than any other. The king, hearing and perceiving the cardinal so deceived in his estimation and choice, could not forbear laughing; but plucked down his visor, and master Neville's also, and dashed out with such a pleasant countenance and cheer, that all noble estates there assembled, seeing the king to be there amongst them, rejoiced very much. The cardinal eftsoons desired his highness to take the place of estate, to whom the king answered, that he would go first and shift his apparel; and so departed, and went straight into my lord's bedchamber, where was a great fire made and prepared for him; and there new apparelled him with rich and princely garments. And in the time of the king's absence, the dishes of the banquet were clean taken up, and the tables spread again with new and sweet perfumed cloths; every man sitting still until the king and his maskers came in among them again, every man being newly apparelled. Then the king took his seat under the cloth of estate, commanding no man to remove, but sit still as they did before. Then in came a new banquet before the king's majesty, and to all the rest through the tables, wherein, I suppose, were served two hundred dishes or above, of wondrous costly meats and devices, subtilly devised.

Thus passed they forth the whole night with banqueting, dancing, and other triumphant devices, to the great comfort of the king, and pleasant regard of the nobility there assembled."

In 1516, Leo X. despatched cardinal Campeggio to England, as his legate, for the purpose of procuring a tithe from the clergy to the prosecuting the war against the Turks, the great enemy of the Christian name. The pride of Wolsey took alarm at this appointment: he could brook no brother near the throne. As representative of the pope, the legate was armed with almost absolute authority over the clergy in the country of his mission. The idea that any one invested with greater ecclesiastical power than himself should openly exercise that power in England, was therefore equally offensive to Wolsey's pride and vanity; and accordingly, through his means, Campeggio was delayed on his route in Paris, till the pope had also formally invested himself with the legatine authority. Having obtained this new dignity, Wolsey made an extraordinary display of the state and parade to which he was so much addicted. He affected a rank superior to any ever claimed by a churchman in England, not excepting the haughty Thomas à Becket; and celebrated mass after the manner of the pope as sovereign pontiff. Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, having at this time written him a letter in which he subscribed himself, in the usual phraseology of clergymen, "your loving brother," Wolsey complained of his presumption in thus challenging an equality with "the lord cardinal legate." * Warham, when informed of the offence which he had thus unintentionally given, made light of the matter, and said, "Know ye not that this man is drunk with too much prosperity?"

But the humble deportment, plain habits, and narrow income of the Italian cardinal ill suited with the pomp and parade which his colleague considered essential to

* The importance which Wolsey attached to his office of legate is evident from what he says to Cavendish on his fall: — "My authority and dignity legatine is gone, wherein consisted all my high honour."

the dignity of the legatine office. Wolsey therefore despatched a quantity of scarlet cloth, richly embroidered, of which Campeggio's attendants are represented to have stood in great need, for the purpose of enabling them to make a showy appearance. He also sent twelve mules with baggage, to swell the Italian cardinal's train. An accident which occurred on this occasion throws curious, indeed ludicrous, light upon Wolsey's vanity. The chests of which the baggage was composed were supposed to contain the jewellery, plate, and costly garments of the Italian legate; but, unhappily for the credit of Campeggio, one of the mules fell, and the coffer which it carried being burst open by the fall, old habiliments, and pieces of broken bread and meat, put into the chest as ballast, were exposed to the laughter of the spectators. It is not improbable that prudence induced Wolsey to thus shun the reflections which the contrast of his own ostentatious magnificence with his colleague's plainness of appearance must naturally have given birth to; though it is much more in keeping with his temper — fond of pomp, and too arrogant to be calculating — to ascribe the transaction wholly to the workings of vanity.* Such conduct strangely contrasts with the vigour and intellect evinced in his able administration of affairs both at home and abroad; but is by no means inconsistent with what we know of the workings of human nature, as they manifest themselves even in the strongest minds. If not generated, it was much fostered by the genius of the catholic worship — so imposing from its numerous ceremonies, magnificent processions, and rigid enforcement of respect to rank.

* This would appear the more probable from the ludicrous anxiety displayed by Wolsey in the escorting of his cardinal's *hat* to England. He seems to have had lofty notions of the dignity of this "hat," and was chagrined by the pope's having forwarded it to him "in a varlet's budget." The "varlet" was, therefore, detained in France till his appearance was, at the cardinal's expense, made more worthy of the treasure of which he was the ignoble guardian. On its landing, "the hat" was met by a great procession at Blackheath, and conducted in solemn triumph to Westminster Abbey. When it had reached the abbey, it "was placed in state on a table, with tapers round it, before an empty suit, and the greatest duke of the land was compelled to make a curtesy to it." — *Tyndal*, quoted by Wordsworth, Eccl. Biog. The hat appears to have acted a very distinguished part in all the cardinal's processions and state exhibitions, and conducted itself, we presume, with becoming dignity and discretion.

One effect of it, however, was, to render Wolsey an object of odium to the nation at large, and to lessen his master in the eyes of all Europe.

Wolsey had now attained a height of grandeur, power*, and wealth, far beyond that ever before or since reached by an English subject; and it might be supposed, would confine his future exertions to retaining himself securely in his lofty station. But ambition, like the air we breathe, expands as we ascend above the ordinary level of humanity, and continues, at a rapidly increasing ratio, to enlarge its dimensions, till its victim reaches a region — a moral Mont Blanc — cold, barren, and cut off from human sympathies, where he perishes heart-frozen, and unmourned of his fellows. So it was with Wolsey. There was one, and but one step higher, which he possibly could reach, and to it were all his thoughts and aspirations henceforth directed with a feverish and concentrated energy. A change now comes over the spirit of the "foreign relations" of England. From this period till the death of Wolsey, their history is but the narrative of the schemes and struggles — tortuous, wily, and double dealing — for the chair of St. Peter of an aspiring mind, which, unsatisfied with the absolute rule of a great empire, felt all it had achieved valueless while there was one station of still more extensive authority filled by another.

Francis I. had offended Wolsey by his tardiness in

* "Erasmus observes (Ep. 1151.), that Wolsey 'visibly reigned more truly than the king.' He was uniformly addressed by foreign powers as a sort of co-monarch. Thus Dr. Taylor writes, that Francis would not perform any part of the treaty of Madrid without 'the *king and cardinal*'s advice;' and that the papal and Venetian ambassadors told him, 'they had letters from the pope to give thanks to the *king and cardinal* for furthering the holy league.' His own language, indeed, implied the co-equal power; hence the well-known phrase, one of the charges against him on his fall, — 'the king and I.' Thus writing, in 1524, to Pace and others, Wolsey says, 'His *highness and I* give unto you hearty thanks.' 'Neither the *king's highness nor I* will advise him.' 'Much it is to the *king's and my* comfort.' 'The *king's highness and I* abide daily knowledge.' 'Arrived here the archbishop of Capua, whom the *king's highness and I* like.' 'The king's *highness and I* be always of the same mind that the emperor is.' 'The *king's highness and I* gave my own lodging and chambers to him.'" — *Turner, from MS. Letters in the British Museum.*

We take leave once for all to state here, that our quotations from letters to and from Wolsey are, unless otherwise specified, taken from the original MS. in the British Museum.

silencing a claimant upon the revenues of the see of Tournay, who for some time had been troublesome to the cardinal; and well knew that, till he had regained his favour, he could have no hope of the alliance of England in his wars with the emperor. His ambassador, accordingly, was desired to express his master's deep regret, that, by mistakes and misapprehensions, he had been so unfortunate as to lose the friendship of one whom he so valued as the cardinal; and that nothing could afford him more unfeigned pleasure than to convince his eminence of the respect and admiration which he entertained for him Francis confirmed the favourable impression which these advances made, by consulting Wolsey on his most secret and difficult affairs, and receiving his opinions with implicit deference as those of an oracle of wisdom. By thus paying flattering homage to Wolsey's vanity, and by the grant of the large pension of which we have already made mention, Henry was persuaded to yield Tournay to France, to conclude a treaty of marriage between his daughter Mary and the dauphin; that city, for the sake of appearance, being laid down as part of the princess's dowry. We have the assertion of one (Polydore Virgil) who was malevolently disposed towards Wolsey, and whose evidence therefore should be received with suspicion, that Wolsey moreover negotiated with the French king for the delivery of Calais; but was dissuaded, by the general unpopularity of the proposition, from bringing it formally before the council.

Through the influence of Wolsey, Henry consented to an interview with the French monarch, who trusted to an address, the fascination of which was owned by all that approached him, to win the friendship and confidence of his English "dear brother." The particulars of this celebrated interview at the *field of the cloth of gold*,—

> "When those suns of glory, those two lights of men,
> Met in the vale of Ardres,"—

are too well known to be now recapitulated. It was sought with avidity by the two youthful, handsome, and chivalrous princes, as an occasion of displaying their

magnificence and knightly accomplishments; and by the cardinal as one for exhibiting, in the presence of two courts, his riches, splendour, and unbounded influence over both monarchs. So far as Francis was concerned, Wolsey had no other immediate design in this display of his influence than its publicity; his friendly offices had been secretly anticipated by the French king's great rival, the emperor Charles; so that the impression which Francis's winning manners, and the generous confidence with which he treated Henry, and the congeniality of their dispositions, must have made on the English monarch, was soon effaced by the treacherous artifices of his favourite. To explain this deceitful conduct, it should be premised, that of the two great factions or influences in the college of cardinals, the French and the imperial, the latter was much the preponderating; and it had been promised to Wolsey (Francis had before assured him of his) in the interval between the appointment and the holding of the interview at Ardres. When Charles found that he could not prevent the meeting of the two monarchs, he applied himself, with his usual finesse, to counteracting its probable effects; and, by a master-stroke of policy, secured Wolsey's friendship, by placing him in immediate possession of the revenues of the sees of Badajos and Placentia in Castile, and promising him his most zealous aid in procuring the papal dignity. Henry was at Canterbury, on his way to France, when the emperor, to the surprise of every body in the nation (except Wolsey, who had secretly planned the visit), landed at Dover; and in the short space of four days had the address to make Henry believe favourably of his character and intentions, and promise to visit him in the Low Countries, after he had taken leave of the French king.

War, as had been anticipated, was soon declared between Francis and the emperor, and both parties earnestly courted the alliance of England. Henry at first affected the office of mediator; but, entirely estranged from the interests of France by the artifices of Wolsey, who, bent

on the triple crown, was ready to sacrifice every consideration to ensure the imperial influence in the next conclave, he took advantage of the first pretext to join his arms to those of the emperor. The war which was now waged against France with more steadiness than the other foreign wars of Henry, but with as little regard to his own and his people's interests, only terminated with the captivity of Francis at the memorable battle of Pavia. It ended as it had begun, in subserviency to the cardinal's passions and ambition of the popedom, which were the sole actuating principle, as far as he was concerned, of the subsequent alliance with France, and declaration of hostilities against Charles.

The first trial of the sincerity of the emperor's friendship took place in 1522, on the election of a successor to Leo X., who died, in the vigour of his age, in the preceding December. It is not easy to determine the degree of the faithlessness of Charles's promises to Wolsey of his zealous influence in the conclave in his favour. The result, and our knowledge of Charles's skill in the art of dissimulation, and readiness to employ the most immoral means to the attainment of his end, would induce us to believe that his promises were given without the remotest intention of fulfilling them; while the fact of Wolsey's having received twenty votes in his favour (twenty-six would have sufficed) would go far to show that the emperor's letter* to his ambassador at Rome, enjoining him to urge the cardinals to elect Wolsey to the papal chair, was not written in a spirit of entire faithlessness. Be this, however, as it may, after a struggle of unusual duration, the imperial influence in the conclave prevailed, and cardinal Adrian, the emperor's tutor, was raised to the popedom under the title of Adrian VI.

The resentment which the pride of Wolsey, mortified by this disappointment of his hopes, was likely to en-

* This letter, written in Latin, is still preserved in the British Museum, (MS. Vitell. book iv. p. 222.) as well as another to Wolsey, also from the emperor, apprising him of its contents, written in French, from Ghent. — MS. Galba, b. vii. p. 160.

gender was dreaded by Charles, who knew full well that his alliance with England depended wholly on his standing well in the good graces of its haughty minister. To prevent, therefore, the loss of so powerful an ally, he visited England for the second time, shortly after Adrian had been elected, and, after augmenting his pension, renewed his promise of aiding the cardinal's pretensions to the popedom at the next vacancy; an event which, from Adrian's extreme age and infirmities, both knew could not be far distant. Wolsey thought it prudent to stifle his resentment, and endeavour, by new services, to ensure the imperial interest in the next conclave. Pope Adrian died in about a year and a half after his election, and Wolsey again entered the lists with his characteristic zeal and increased hopes of success. At his request, Henry wrote to the emperor, reminding him of his promises, and urging him to fulfil them as he valued his friendship; the English ambassadors and agents at Rome being at the same time instructed to spare, among the members of the sacred college, neither bribes nor promises. But Charles again deceived him; and cardinal de' Medici, with the support of the imperial party, was elected pope, under the title of Clement VII. From that hour his study was how he could revenge himself on the emperor: a close alliance was soon after entered into with France *, and war declared by England against her recent imperial ally.

While Wolsey was thus pursuing his ambitious schemes for the attainment of the papal dignity, and moved kings and nations like so many chess pawns in hostility against each other, according to his views of his own personal aggrandisement, his administration at home was conducted with great firmness and ability, but with an arbitrariness alien from the genius of the constitution. The continental wars and alliances in which Henry was more constantly involved than any of his immediate predecessors, joined with his own lavish habits

* On this occasion Wolsey received a bribe of 100,000 crowns from Francis, under the pretence of arrears due on the Tournay pension.

of expenditure, rendered his demands upon his subjects' money oppressively urgent and frequent; the immense treasure left him by his father being so rapidly dissipated that he had recourse to his parliament for assistance in the very first year of his reign. We have already mentioned the trying circumstances in which Wolsey's arrogance induced him to take upon himself the difficult duties of lord treasurer on the resignation of the duke of Norfolk, who too well knew, as the cardinal soon experienced, that oppressive taxation was the only grievance which the people of England, during the reign of the first two Tudors, complained of and openly resisted. So extremely tenacious were they of their money, that the same people who saw arbitrary outrages on their national privileges pass without remonstrance, and who saw innocent men of all ranks led to the scaffold without a murmur, actually broke out twice in rebellion against the king's commissioners for levying loans and benevolences.

Wolsey, nothing daunted by this temper of the public mind, proceeded to raise money by loans, impositions, benevolences, and every other form of exaction. His first act was one of great prudence: he applied himself to the ascertaining the capability of the people to bear taxation, and for this purpose caused a general survey to be made of the whole kingdom; or, to speak in modern parliamentary language, he caused returns of the number of men, their ages, profession, capital, revenue, and clear income in England and Wales, to be minutely and accurately made out. These returns afforded a very cheering picture of the opulence of the kingdom, and induced him to issue privy seals, demanding particular sums, by way of "loans" (a mode of taxation, though irregular and despotic, not without precedent) from the more wealthy. The success of this measure misled Henry in the next year, 1523, to publish an edict for a general tax, also called a "loan," from his subjects, by which he levied five shillings in the pound from the clergy, and two shillings from the laity. A parliament

and a convocation were summoned soon after in 1524. With the hope of inducing the commons to imitate the example of the clergy, Wolsey first addressed himself to the convocation, over whom his legatine authority had made him irresistible, and demanded the entire half of the ecclesiastical revenues to be levied in five years, at the rate of two shillings in the pound during that time. There was an appearance of opposition; but he promptly overawed it, haughtily reprimanding the refractory members, and descanting on the general wealth and luxury of the clergy and of the nation at large, "as though he had repined," says the Chronicler, "or disclaimed that any man should fare well or be well clothed but himself."

Elated by his success in the convocation, Wolsey came down to the commons, and in the same imperious tone demanded 800,000*l.* (equal, all things considered, to from seven to eight millions of our present coin) to be raised in four years by a tax of one fifth (four shillings in the pound) on the lands and goods of the kingdom. The tax was in amount beyond all precedent, being alleged to exceed the entire current coin of the realm, and met with such successful resistance, that a committee was sent to remonstrate with the cardinal, and to beg him to reduce his demand one half. Wolsey rudely dismissed the committee, and came down to intimidate the house into granting the original sum. The circumstances of his reception by sir Thomas More, then speaker, have been narrated elsewhere in this volume by a master pen, and have been justly commented upon as a remarkable instance of the spirit of freedom which, under abject language, lurked in the minds of the commons of England. The house presented an unusual scene in those arbitrary times; for, though composed chiefly of the courtiers and officers of the crown, the matter was debated, "and beaten for fifteen or sixteen days together," and "was the greatest and sorest hold in the lower house that ever was seen." * About three fourths of the original demand was ultimately voted, to be paid by

* Ellis's Letters illustrative of English History.

instalments in four years: but Wolsey, greatly dissatisfied and displeased with this imperfect obedience, compelled the people to pay up the whole subsidy at once, and did not summon a parliament for seven years after.

Even these exorbitant demands and levies did not satisfy the rapacity which the profuse magnificence of the monarch and the ambition of his minister generated. The very next year (1525) after this affair with the commons, commissioners were appointed to demand the one sixth part of every man's substance, payable in money, plate, or jewels, according to the valuation of property taken in 1522. This was the most audacious attempt that had been made since the reign of Edward III. to levy a general imposition without consent of parliament, and, if successful, would necessarily destroy the free character of the English constitution; for, if taxes could be raised by the simple edict of the executive, the great use and privilege of the representative branch of the government would necessarily be dispensed with, and parliament only required to give a legislative sanction to the other encroachments of a despotic king or minister on the rights of the people. "But the courage and love of freedom natural to the English commons," says an able modern writer *, "speaking in the hoarse voice of tumult, though very ill supported by their superiors, preserved us in so great a peril."

Wolsey's deportment was in perfect keeping with this most arbitrary measure: he made the demand in person of the mayor and chief citizens of London, and upon their remonstrating told them very plainly, that "it were the better that they should suffer indigence than that the king at this time should lack; and therefore," added he, "beware, and resist not, nor ruffle not in this case; for it may fortune to *cost some of you their heads.*" † The

* Hallam, Constitutional History of England.

† This head chopping mode of raising supplies appears to have been in particular esteem with the king during his reign. While the opposition of the commons to the former imposition lasted, Henry sent for a Mr. Edward Montague, who had considerable influence in the house, and said — "Ho, man, will they not suffer my bill to pass?" and laying his hand on

mayor asked permission to consult the common council before he should declare himself; but the cardinal peremptorily refused him; and, in order to prevent the effect of an united opposition, required that he and all the aldermen should separately confer with himself about the matter.

But there is a limit to the most passive submission, particularly in the present instance, when the great sore of public feeling—illegal and oppressive taxation—was tented to the quick. The people gave vent to their discontent in murmurs, complaints, and opposition to the commissioners *; and a serious insurrection, that threatened to become general, broke out in the "butcher dog's" (so the insurgents contemptuously termed him) native county. The proud tempers of Wolsey and his master were overawed by this menacing spirit of the "licentious populace," and letters were speedily despatched to all the counties, declaring that the king meant not to employ force in levying his late imposition, and that he would take nothing from his "loving subjects," but by way of voluntary benevolence. A general pardon was granted to the contumacious rebels, their guilt being prudently imputed, after the manner of Shakespeare's Apothecary's—to poverty, and not want of inclination to do better. The odium of the entire transaction, as usual, fell upon the minister, whom all parties, rich and poor, united in denouncing as the subverter of their laws and liberties; while the clemency of the pardon, by an illusion, which (like other theoretical anomalies in the constitution) on the whole "works well" in practice, was ascribed wholly to the benign affection of the sovereign.

Montague's head, who was then on his knees before him, "Get my bill passed by to-morrow, or else to-morrow this head of yours will be off." The bill was passed, and Mr. Montague's head was permitted to remain in its ordinary position.

* Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter to Wolsey on these discontents of the populace, observes, that "he would that the time had suffered that this practising with the people for so great sums might have been spared till the *cuckoo time and the hot weather* (*at which time mad brains be most busy*) had been overpassed." This is a specimen of the physiological wisdom of our ancestors.

It might, perhaps, be supposed, that, however unpopular was Wolsey's civil administration, his rapacity and arbitrary innovations would not extend to the body of which he was a member, and that his church government would be marked by so much of the *esprit du corps* as to ensure him at least against the ill-will of his ecclesiastical brethren. But the contrary was the fact: the clergy feared and hated him with the acrimony of their profession; and curses, not loud but deep, followed his wake from the poorer monks whom he had expelled from their dwellings, and whose revenues he had applied to the indulgence of his own vanity and love of magnificence;—and from the more wealthy secular and professed priests and dignitaries whom he had compelled to compromise by large sums of money for such charges as he pleased to allege against them, and upon whom he had attempted every means of reform, but the purest and most efficacious, that of example.

We have seen that he was joined in the legatine authority with Campeggio, a part of whose duty it was to enquire into the condition of the monasteries throughout England. Wolsey meditated great designs in this legatine visitation of the religious houses, which, however, he wished should be felt as the effects of his own undivided authority. At his instance, Henry applied to the pope to have Campeggio recalled, and Wolsey instituted alone in the legatine power. Leo X. accordingly issued a bull, constituting the English cardinal legate *a latere*, with the unusual privilege of dispensing with all church laws for one year. He purchased at very high prices renewals of this bull from Leo and his successor, and was finally invested with the legatine authority, and appointed the pope's vicar-general in England for life by Clement VII. His first act as pope (which he was to all intents and purposes) in England, was the erecting an office which he called the legatine court; the authority of which, invested as he was now with all power ecclesiastical as well as civil, was really unbounded: by it he assumed a kind

of inquisitorial jurisdiction over the clergy *, and even over the laity, unknown in this country; for he not only directed enquiries into all offences against good morals, which were not cognizable by the law, but actually extended his office of censor to levities of conduct and matters of conscience. The immoralities springing from the wealth and ignorance of the clergy were the constant themes of his denouncement, considered at the time the more audacious and offensive, from the contrast afforded by his own expensive and dissolute habits. † The monks and other members of religious houses were, from the more open libertinism of the lives of many of them, particularly obnoxious to this most oppressive tribunal, and were compelled to purchase an indemnity from time to time by the payment of large sums of money.

Not content with this authority, and the great emoluments derived from it, Wolsey assumed the whole power of nominating to whatever priories or benefices he pleased, without regard to the right of election in the monks, and of patronage in the nobility and gentry; and, moreover, usurped the fees and jurisdiction of the prerogative and bishops' courts, particularly in the cases, the most profitable, of wills and testaments. But Wolsey's designs for the reformation of the clergy were not limited to the fines and punishments of his legatine inquisition. He clearly saw that the inevitable effects of the corruption and ignorance of the ecclesiastical body would be fatal to religion, unless some bold and effectual steps were taken to correct them; and therefore, says

* He caused returns of the number of churches, monasteries, and religious houses, with their revenues, &c., in the kingdom, to be made out. From these returns there appear to have been 9407 churches in England in the time of Wolsey. In the time of bishop Gibson (Charles II.) there were not more than 9282. "I know not," says that prelate, "how this difference should arise, unless it be that some were demolished in the last age, and that chapels parochial were omitted."

† Wolsey's face was scarred by disease, consequent upon his illicit amours, to a degree that affected the sight of one of his eyes. Hence all likenesses of him are in profile. He left one illegitimate son, Thomas Winter, whom he educated at great cost in Paris, and presented with eleven livings. One article of his impeachment charges him with having compelled a sir John Henley to resign a farm belonging to a convent at Chester, in favour of the man who had married the mother of two other of his illegitimate children. But such profligate libertinism was not unusual in those times in clergymen.

Burnet, "intended to visit all the monasteries of England, that, so discovering their corruptions, he might the better justify the design he had to suppress most of them, and convert them into bishoprics, cathedrals, collegiate churches, and colleges." A bull was obtained from Rome to carry this design into effect; but Wolsey was, according to the same author, "diverted from making any use of it, by some, who advised him rather to suppress monasteries by the pope's authority than proceed in a method which would raise great hatred against himself, cast foul aspersions on religious orders, and give the enemies of the church great advantages against it; yet," observes the bishop, "he had communicated his design to the king; and his secretary Thomas Cromwell, understanding it, was thereby instructed how to proceed afterwards, when they went about the total suppression of the monasteries."

But Wolsey was not altogether "diverted" from his design, nor was he induced to relinquish its prosecution in its entire extent by the motives with which Burnet alleges him to have been actuated. With a courage worthy of his high ambition and extraordinary fortune, he in two years dissolved forty-one of the lesser monasteries; and was only restrained in his course by a friendly admonition from the king, to avoid giving future occasion to the "mumblings" and "murmurings" which his innovations had given birth to among the poorer classes, who were strongly attached to the monastic institutions, from the shelter afforded by them against the extreme ills of poverty, and from their being the only means of advancement to persons of lowly origin. Wolsey thus established the precedent, which

> "The majestic lord,
> Who broke the bonds of Rome,"

a few years after so extensively acted upon, and which so much favoured the spread of the reformation in England.

The use to which Wolsey applied the funds of the dissolved monasteries sheds a bright lustre upon his

character, and goes far to atone for the arbitrary means which he employed to attain so excellent an end. The revenues and endowments of the monastery of St. Frideswide, the wealthiest and most considerable of the proscribed institutions, were appropriated to the formation of a "college of secular priests," still in existence as Christ Church college, Oxford *, and the revenues of the rest were employed with equal zeal in the same noble design of diffusing the means of learning. Through his aid, also, lectures were read at Oxford on theology, civil law, physic, philosophy, mathematics, Greek, rhetoric, and humanity, by the most eminent scholars and masters of that day, many of whom being foreigners were induced to come into England by his reputation as a munificent patron of literature. Ipswich, his native town, tasted largely of his bounty and zeal in the cause of education. He established a school, and made arrangements for a college there; and penned himself a Latin preface to Lilly's Grammar (then just published), which he particularly desired should be used in his foundation. We shall quote a portion—the opening part—of this preface, as it is the only effort of Wolsey's pen, not connected with state transactions or his private affairs, that has come down to us. The royalty of its style is characteristic.

"Thomas, Cardinal of York, to the masters of Ipswich School, greeting.

"We imagine nobody can be ignorant of the care, study, and industry of mind, with which we have hitherto directed our labours, not for our own private interest, but that of our country, and all our citizens, which we have very much at heart, and in which particular we shall deem ourselves to have been most amply gratified, if by any Divine blessing we shall improve the minds of the people. Wherefore, being filled with the

* "Ever witness for him
Those twins of learning that he raised in you,
Ipswich and Oxford!"
Says Griffith, of Wolsey, in Shakspeare's "Henry VIII."

utmost zeal to promote learning and piety in our native place, which she claims of us as a certain right, we have founded a Latin school, no ways inelegant, as a testimony of our chief regard for them. But as it would be imperfect to erect a school, however magnificent, unless attended by learned masters, we have every way studied to give the government thereof to chosen and approved teachers, under whose tuition British youth may by degrees, from their earliest years, imbibe both morals and letters; well knowing that the hopes of the republic arise from their minds being then formed aright; and that the same may more happily and speedily be brought to bear, we have taken all manner of care that you should have such books as are most necessary for the instruction of them.

"In this our new school, whereof ye are masters, ye must teach the boys by turns, and diligently exercise them in the rudiments and method of learning, that they may afterwards be advanced to the most elegant literature and the best of morals. To this purpose, if ye labour with equal care to our satisfaction, ye shall not only deserve our great favour for your pains, but make it also happy for your successors. Fare ye well.*

"From our palace, A. D. 1528. Kal. Sept."

The deep interest which Wolsey took in the instruction of youth is, as we before remarked, the bright feature of his character, shedding a lustre alike on his heart and intellect. No man seems to have been more aware of the influence of external circumstances, of apparently the most trifling nature, in tinging and moulding the plastic mind of children, as, indeed, no man excelled him in knowledge of the reflex influence which circumstances in general have on human opinions and actions. He superintended with the most assiduous attention the education of his godson, the earl of Richmond (natural son of the king), and in his own hand-

* See an Essay on a System of Classical Instruction, (London, John Taylor, 1829,) for the remainder of this interesting letter, in which Wolsey lays down the course of studies to be pursued in his school with singular professional minuteness.

writing drew up a plan of the household and domestic arrangements, in which the minutest particulars were noted, of that young nobleman, on his entering the sixth year of his age. He also superintended the domestic education of the princess Mary; and, in the height of his power and ambition, stooped to determine whether or not the princess should have "spice plates and a ship of silver for the almes dishe," and if a "trumpet and rebeks" were a fitting toy for her pastime hours "at the solempne fest of Christmas." He is but little read in the philosophy of the human heart, and holds but little sympathy with the labours of a Locke and a Fenelon, who does not admire these proofs of the loftiest wisdom, and as such of the loftiest benevolence. Would that Wolsey had not wasted his fine talents in the mad dreams of ambition, but had applied them to the improvement of the social elements of human happiness! How much more would he thus have benefited mankind, and how much more would he have contributed to his own peace of mind, and to his honourable claims upon the gratitude and admiration of posterity!

The spirit of rigid and minute detail which we have been just noticing, and which, like his love of the trappings and ceremony of office, was fostered, if not generated, by the genius of the catholic worship, is seen in his bills for the improvement of trade, — a subject to which he gave great attention, — and for amending the various processes of the law, which, as lord chancellor, he, alone then had the right of bringing before parliament. The great truth (beginning at length to be known by legislators and other men "wise in their generation"), that all that trade wants to thrive, is to be let alone, was not known for centuries after the time of Wolsey; therefore we need not be surprised to find that the restrictive, and protective, and prohibitive principles, in all their perfection, are those by which he was actuated, and, as a consequence, that he injured the general commerce of the country much more than he benefited particular "interests." The very number and minute-

ness, however, of those bills and restrictions entitle him to our praise, evincing as they do a statesmanlike view of the importance of trade far beyond his age, though they betray a common ignorance of the best mode of promoting it. Some of those restrictions were of a ludicrously oppressive nature, particularly from the minute rigidness with which he caused them to be enforced. Acts had been passed regulating the rates of wages of labourers, the hours of meals and rest, and, with a view probably to encourage some domestic manufacture, specifying the apparel of the "operative" classes, to be worn under penalty and forfeiture. This petty legislation, as might naturally be expected, proved highly unpopular. At Rochester the just indignation of the populace burst forth on seeing a man pilloried for merely wearing a "ryven" shirt instead of the texture prescribed by act of parliament. Wolsey was too stiff-necked to abate a jot of any restriction, however minute or vexatious, once it had received the sanction of the legislature, and therefore rigidly enforced those oppressive and useless statutes; he himself, "observing one day an elderly man in an old crimson jacket, adorned with various broaches, with his own hands took from him the prohibited dress," by way of example to his commissioners.

We possess the most unquestionable authority of the ability and general impartiality of the cardinal's administration in the court of chancery, in which he "spared neither high nor low, but judged every estate according to their merits and deserts." Sir Thomas More thus writes to his friend Erasmus: — "The archbishop of Canterbury" (Warham, whom historians and biographers, including Cavendish himself, erroneously represent to have resigned the seals from disgust at Wolsey's towering ascendancy) "has at length resigned the office of chancellor; which burthen, as you know, he had strenuously endeavoured to lay down for some years; and, the long-wished for retreat being now attained, he enjoys a most pleasant recess in his studies, with the agreeable

reflection of having acquitted himself so honourably in that high station. The cardinal of York succeeds him, who discharges the duties of that post so admirably as to surpass the hopes of all, notwithstanding the great opinion of his other eminent qualities, and, which is more rare, to give pleasure and satisfaction after so excellent a predecessor." We need not say more on the ability of Wolsey's chancellorhip, and will only add, on the subject of his legal administration, that he instituted the most salutary regulations for the prevention and punishment of perjury and highway robbery, then very common crimes; that he also established courts for protecting the poor against the oppression of the rich; and that his ingenuity and influence were sedulously applied during his entire career to rendering the laws intelligible, simple, cheap, and respected. So far his country was his debtor.

It was during the administration of Wolsey that Martin Luther sounded the tocsin of religious freedom in Germany, by which the usurped authority of the bishops of Rome was shaken to its foundation. The tide of the reformation had not, however, yet flowed into England, where the public mind was perhaps still more fitted for its reception; so that the cardinal was not called on to adopt any very decided measures in obedience to his master's purpose either of forwarding or retarding it. It is probable that he conceived the conduct of Luther merely as that of a temporary schismatic, whose bold insolence would abate as its novelty faded, and as the selfish passions which were mixed up with its birth yielded to the influence of time and expostulation. The features of the reformation were not revealed in all their brightness, depth, and breadth, even to its authors, or, more properly speaking, its immediate instruments, for years after the death of Wolsey; so that it is not to be wondered at that he viewed the "affair" of the professor of Wittemberg with the pope, concerning the sale of indulgences and the amount of the authority of the papal see, for a long time, with something of the indif-

ference of a passing incident. He was himself very much inclined for "a reformation of the head and members" of the church, as appears from his approval of the instructions to the English representatives at the council of Lateran*; and from his anxiety to correct the ignorance and licentious habits of the inferior clergy. But throwing off the yoke of the Roman see, toiling as he was with feverish ambition for the chair of St. Peter, was an end that he never for a moment could contemplate, and would resist with all his energy.

Our readers are aware that Henry won the title of the "Defender of the Faith" from the pope, as the reward of his book against the "blasphemous, atheistical, and sacrilegious" tenets of Luther. Though it should seem that Wolsey had no share in the composition of the work, yet we learn, from Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More, that that most excellent man was over-ruled by him, in his advice to Henry, to omit, or at least to qualify, that portion in which the papal supremacy is asserted; and the cardinal's own letter to the pope, which accompanied a copy of the work, shows his anxiety to have it inferred that Henry's zeal against Luther was mainly instigated by his minister. He could not, however, even though personally inclined, remain a passive spectator of the progress of the Lutheran controversy, after his master had thus decidedly thrown down the gauntlet against the Wittenberg professor. Accordingly he caused pope Leo's bull against Luther to be posted on every church door in England, along with the forty-two "damnable and pestiferous" errors of that great reformer; by which means, as must have been obvious, had he bestowed on the act a few moments' serious reflection, he strongly favoured the growth and spread of the "noxious briars" which it was intended to eradicate.

Neither did Luther himself perceive the advantage to the new doctrines of thus fixing them upon the atten-

* This council was summoned in 1511, by Julius II., to counteract the effect of the antagonist council of Pisa. The English representatives are enjoined to seek "pro bono universalis ecclesiæ Catholicæ, et pro reformatione ejus, *tam in capite, quam in membris.*" — *Rymer*, 325.

tion of the public mind; for, looking only to the motive and the insult, he denounced (in his Apologetical Letter to Henry, the most extraordinary of all his extraordinary publications,) Wolsey, with his usual vehemence and coarseness, calling him "illud monstrum et publicum odium Dei et hominum, Cardinalis Eboracensis, pestis illa regni tui," &c. This abuse had the effect of sharpening Wolsey's judgment; for we find that he immediately issued a command, requiring all persons, under pain of excommunication, to deliver up every work of Luther in their possession. He also applied himself, with redoubled zeal, to the improvement of the schools and colleges throughout the kingdom; revised the statutes of the universities; took a warm interest in the success and arrangements of St. Paul's school, lately founded under the celebrated dean Colet: in fact, he seemed determined to supply the church, in the event of a combat, with its most fitting armoury—the superior morals and learning of its ministers. "Learning to learning," was his mode of religious warfare; there being nothing vindictive or sanguinary in Wolsey's character, where his personal feelings were not offended; and it should be remembered to his credit, that one article of his impeachment was his remissness in hunting and punishing heretics, as those who had adopted the tenets of Luther were then designated.

Wolsey had now for many years exercised the entire ecclesiastical and civil power of the kingdom with uncontrolled authority, and without any diminution of his master's confidence. His talents, as we before observed, had unfolded themselves as the field of their exertion had widened, while his unpopularity outran both, till it became universal. The nobility hated him for the stern iron rule by which he compelled them to obey the laws, and for monopolising with haughty ostentation the royal confidence and favour, which they considered to be their birthright. Proud of their ancient descent, they could ill brook such imperious sway, even from the monarch, and burned with indignation at being obliged to bow and

cringe to an arrogant "butcher's boy," who set no limits to his demands on their respectful bearing. They regarded him, moreover, as the murderer of the most illustrious of their body, Stafford, the duke of Buckingham *, though the death of that nobleman was at least as much the consequence of Henry's savage jealousy of his Plantagenet blood as of the cardinal's vindictiveness. His arbitrary oppressions in the shape of loans and benevolences, and his still more arbitrary attempt to levy taxes without the aid of parliament, had earned him the resentment of the poorer classes (always prone to regard with envious hatred the conduct of men of lowly origin), and of the small band of patriots who, even in that despotic age, cherished a love of constitutional freedom. On the other hand, his undisguised contempt of the ignorance and gross habits of the mass of the clergy, and his arbitrary efforts to punish and amend both, could not fail to make him the object of resentment of a body whose ill-will is proverbially implacable, and which, in the instance of Wolsey, was the more natural, as they "thought it did not become him, whose vices were notorious and scandalous, to tax others whose faults were neither so great nor so eminent as his were."

For all these reasons, Wolsey's administration was highly unpopular, and his destruction sought after by a host of eager enemies. But till the affair of the divorce from queen Catherine, and consequent marriage with Anne Boleyn †, that is, till his will and appetite were in-

* Granger tells, on the authority of Dod's Church History, that Wolsey, either from vanity or insolence, washed in the basin which the duke had just before held to the king while he washed his hands; upon which the duke poured the water into the cardinal's shoes. This so provoked the haughty prelate, that he threatened to sit upon his skirts: which menace occasioned the duke's having no skirts to his coat when he next appeared in the royal presence. The king asking the reason of this singular appearance, the duke told him that it was only to disappoint the cardinal.

† The language of Cavendish on this head is amusingly characteristic of the metaphorical phraseology of the age. "Thus passed the cardinal his life and time from day to day, and year to year, in such great wealth, joy, and triumph, and glory, having always on his side the king's special favour; until Fortune, of whose favour no man is longer assured than she is disposed, began to wax something wroth with his prosperous estate, and thought she would devise a means to abate his high port; wherefore she

flamed and thwarted by delay and opposition — there appears to have been no change in the feelings of the king towards his favourite. Then, indeed, Wolsey's fall was as rapid and astounding as his rise; and then it was that Henry verified a remarkable declaration of his to one who warned him of his favourite's power and munificence — "The hand that made him can destroy him when it lists." Wolsey was himself the first to perceive what his knowledge of Henry's unsteady temper, and of the precarious nature of his hold on his affections, must have often presented to his fancy in those moments of prophetic sadness which steal over us even in our most prosperous and happy hours; and probably the magnificent gift of Hampton Court to his master was the consequence of his perceiving some unconscious workings in the royal mind of jealousy of his extraordinary wealth and unsubjectlike splendour. Be that as it may, the effect of the gift was to deafen the king to the complaints and insinuations that were constantly thrown out against the cardinal, and to make the latter indulge his passion for pomp and regal magnificence with more ostentation than ever.

It does not fall within our design to repeat what historians have informed us of the proceedings in the case of the divorce of queen Catharine, more than belongs to the part which Wolsey took in them, and to the manner in which they affected his fortunes. It does not appear when Henry first communicated to his minister his scruples of the legality of his marriage with his brother's widow; but they were no sooner communicated, than acknowledged to be well founded. These scruples, it is perhaps necessary to premise, were as old as the marriage itself; a dispensation of the pope being required before it could be entered into, and the prince himself being only twelve years old when the contract was ratified.

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procured Venus, *the insatiate goddess*, to be her instrument. To work her purpose, she brought the king in love with a gentlewoman, that, after she perceived and felt the king's good will towards her, and how diligent he was both to please her, and to grant all her requests, she wrought the cardinal much displeasure, as hereafter shall be more at large declared."

Henry VII. never intended that the contract should be permanently binding, and only employed it as a pretext for not repaying the large sum which Catherine brought as her dowry. He ordered the prince to protest against it as soon as he became of age; and charged him, on his deathbed, as his last injunction, not to fulfil an alliance so unprecedented, and so exposed to insurmountable objections. But Henry was in the height of youth and passion, and spurned all remonstrance. For eighteen years the legality of the marriage was not doubted, though indeed the legitimacy of the princess Mary, the only surviving child of this union, was objected to by the states of Castile whilst her marriage with the emperor Charles was negotiated, and by the ambassador of France when it was intended to betroth her to one of the French king's brothers.

Years, however, passed on, without any particular mention of the scruples, till what Fuller designates the "cunning chastity" of Anne Boleyn made her refuse to share Henry's bed but as his lawful wife. Queen Catherine had become old and past child-bearing: Henry, burning with a new passion, loathed her with the aversion of satiety: the scruples concerning the legality of the contract rushed to his assistance: all his bishops, Fisher excepted, assured him, and Thomas Aquinas convinced him, that the marriage was unlawful. He communicated his conviction to Wolsey*, and that pliant minister pledged himself to "bring the matter about to his heart's content," so far as the pope was concerned. This happened in 1527, as Wolsey was about to set out on an embassy to France, to conclude a close alliance between the two crowns, and to treat for the liberation of the captive pontiff; an embassy which Cavendish with

* Both the queen and her nephew, the emperor Charles, charged Wolsey with having originated the divorce indirectly through the bishop of Tarbes. "Of this trouble I may only thank you, my lord cardinal of York; for, because I have wondered at your high pride and vain glory, and *abhor your voluptuous life*, and little regard your presumptuous power and tyranny, therefore *of malice you have kindled this fire and set this matter abroad*, and in especial for the great malice that you bear to my nephew the emperor, because he would not satisfy your ambition and make you pope by force." *Hall.* And to the same effect Charles in *Le Grand.*

plausibility ascribes to the malice of his enemies, "in order to get him out of the king's daily presence, and to convey him out of the realm, that they might have convenient leisure and opportunity to adventure their long desired enterprise; and by the aid of their chief mistress, my lady Ann, to deprove him so unto the king in his absence, that he would be rather in his high displeasure, than in his accustomed favour; or at the least to be in less estimation with his majesty."

The cardinal conducted this embassy with even more than his usual state and magnificence, and was received every where with a respect only paid to the most powerful monarchs. His train consisted of 1200 lords and gentlemen on horseback, attired in the most costly livery.

"On his landing at Calais, he called before him all his noblemen and gentlemen into his privy chamber; where they being assembled, [he] said unto them in this wise in effect: — 'I have called you hither to this intent, to declare unto you, that I considering the intelligence that ye minister unto me, and the good will that I bear you again for the same, intending to remember your diligent service hereafter, in place where ye shall receive condign thanks and rewards. And also I would show you further what authority I have received directly from the king's highness; and to instruct you somewhat of the nature of the Frenchmen; and then to inform you what reverence ye shall use unto me for the high honour of the king's majesty, and also how ye shall entertain the Frenchmen, whensoever ye shall meet at any time. First, ye shall understand that the king's majesty, upon certain weighty considerations, hath, for the more advancement of his royal dignity, assigned me in this journey to be his lieutenant-general; and what reverence belongeth to the same I will tell you. That for my part I must, by virtue of my commission of lieutenantship, assume and take upon me, in all honours and degrees, to have all such service and reverence as to his highness' presence is meet and due: and nothing thereof to be neglected or omitted by me that to his royal estate

is appurtenant. And for my part ye shall see me that I will not omit one jot thereof. Therefore, because ye shall not be ignorant in that behalf, is one of the special causes of this your assembly, willing and commanding you as ye entend my favour not to forget the same in time and place, but every of you do observe this information and instruction as ye will at my return avoid the king's indignation, but to obtain his highness' thanks, the which I will further for you as ye shall deserve.

"'Now to the point of the Frenchmen's nature,—ye shall understand that their disposition is such, that they will be at the first meeting as familiar with you as they had been acquainted with you long before, and commune with you in the French tongue as though ye understood every word they spake: therefore in like manner, be ye as familiar with them again as they be with you. If they speak to you in the French tongue, speak you to them in the English tongue; for if you understand not them, they shall no more understand you.' And my lord speaking merrily to one of the gentlemen there, being a Welshman, 'Rice,' quoth he, 'speak thou Welsh to him, and I am well assured that thy Welsh shall be more diffuse to him than his French shall be to thee.' And then quoth he again to us all, 'Let all your entertainment and behaviour be according to all gentleness and humanity, that it may be reported, after your departure from thence, that ye be gentlemen of right good behaviour, and of much gentleness, and that ye be men that know your duty to your sovereign lord, and to your master, allowing much your great reverence. Thus shall ye not only obtain to yourselves great commendation and praise for the same, but also advance the honour of your prince and country. Now go your ways admonished of all these points, and prepare yourselves against to-morrow, for then we intend, God willing, to set forward."*

Wolsey's "progress" from Calais to Amiens, where Francis awaited him, was accompanied with all the

* Cavendish.

honours and privileges of royalty,—here, as a cardinal, proclaiming a day for the remission of sins — there, exercising the regal privilege of relieving confined debtors. As he was in the height of his resentment against Charles, and did not yet despair of the popedom, he concluded a most solemnly-binding compact on the part of his sovereign with the French king, and strove to win that monarch to his personal interests by all possible expedients. Among the rest, he promised to have his master's marriage with queen Catherine annulled by the pope; and the princess Renée, Francis's sister-in-law, made queen of England. Full of this project, he returned home.

He met the king in Kent, on his way to London, and entered into an explanation of his embassy, dwelling particularly on the advantages of the projected alliance with a French princess. Henry received him coldly, and told him that he did not want a French princess, for that Anne Boleyn should be his queen as soon as Wolsey's zeal had obtained the papal sanction. The cardinal was thunderstruck at this declaration, for he saw in its fulfilment his inevitable ruin. He was not ignorant of the king's passion for Anne, for, at Henry's command, he had, long before his embassy, annulled her contract with lord Percy, and had compelled that young nobleman to marry another lady; but he considered it to be the mere ebullition of lust, which would most probably end in her becoming the king's concubine. Still considering the king's resolution to be dictated by his coarser feelings, he threw himself at Henry's knees, and implored him not to persist in it, urging every topic he thought likely to affect his pride or his interest. But he might as well bay the moon as attempt to talk Henry's appetite into moderation. He was dismissed with a command to lose no time in fulfilling his promise of "bringing the affair of the divorce about to the king's satisfaction." Notwithstanding this rebuff Wolsey did not altogether abandon his French alliance, for he still trusted in the effect of delay in

abating the fervour of his master's present passion, and in thereby disposing him to entertain his project with less reluctance on a future occasion. He knew, however, that, whatever should be the result of the affair with Anne Boleyn, it "would be as much as his life was worth" to procure the papal dispensation; and accordingly applied himself with extraordinary zeal to gain the pope over to his purpose.

Our readers, we take it for granted, are acquainted with the evasive conduct of Clement VII. in the matter of the divorce; with his vacillations between the "hammer and the forge," as he himself termed it—his fears to offend the emperor, whose prisoner he lately was, and his anxiety to be on good terms with the court of England; with the proceedings of the trial opened before his legates Campeggio and Wolsey (which the pen of Shakspeare has recorded in his imperishable language, and which the genius of Mrs. Siddons, and the classic taste of the Kembles, has pictured in a style worthy of that language on the memory of the fading generation); with the artful adjourning of the process to Rome; and with all the schemes employed by that subtle court to delay the adverse decision to the last moment. Wolsey was no party to these time-killing evasions. On the contrary, his letters betoken a deep and feverish anxiety to have the decretal bull issued without delay or qualification. In the letter in which he congratulates the pope on his obtaining his liberty, he urges him to despatch the king's business. "This only I will add," he says, "that that which is desired is holy and just, and very much for the safety and quiet of the kingdom, which is most devoted to the apostolic see." He told Clement that his delaying the bull would be his certain ruin, and would endanger the obedience of the crown of England to the papal see. He wrote long and most earnest letters to the ambassadors at Rome, in which all the arguments that a most anxious mind could devise are forcibly urged to persuade the pope to grant the king's desire. He offers to take the blame of the entire proceeding

" on his own soul," if there was any thing informal or " amiss" in it. He entreated Campeggio, who was sought for as the legate, " for his known tractableness," to hasten to England as he valued his own interest and his friend's safety. In another letter Wolsey writes, " For my part, I would expose any thing to my life, yea, life itself, rather than see the inconveniences that may ensue upon disappointing of the king's desires."

But all this zeal availed him not: the friends of Anne were his implacable enemies; and she was easily led to believe that the delay of her marriage * was wholly owing to his predilection for another alliance. This being a crime which the female heart never forgives, she lost no opportunity of poisoning the ear of her royal lover against his favourite. On the other hand, the friends of the queen regarded him as the prime mover and originator of the whole proceeding, unmindful of the king's solemn declaration to the contrary, and sought his destruction with all the virulence of insulted honour, sharpened by revenge. It was suggested to Henry, that all the crosses and evasions with which the pope had so long thwarted his matrimonial designs were but the

* The reader will, we are sure, be gratified by perusing the following *naïve* letter from Anne Boleyn to Wolsey concerning the dispensation for her marriage: —

" My Lord,

" In my most humblest wise that my poor heart can think, I do thank your grace for your kind letter, and for your rich and goodly present, the which I shall never be able to deserve without your help: of the which I have hitherto had so great plenty, that all the days of my life I am most bound of all creatures, next the king's grace, to love and serve your grace: of the which I beseech you never to doubt that ever I shall vary from this thought as long as any breath is in my body. And as touching your grace's trouble with the sweat [this allusion to the 'sweating sickness' shows the letter to have been written in 1528], I thank our Lord that them that I desired and prayed for are scaped, and that is the king and you; not doubting but that God has preserved you both for great causes, known only of his high wisdom. And as for the coming of the legate, I desire that much, and if it be God's pleasure, I pray him to send this matter shortly to a good end, and then I trust, my lord, to recompense part of your great pains. In the which I must require you in the mean time to accept my good will, in the stead of the power, the which must proceed partly from you, as our Lord knoweth; to whom I beseech to send you long life, with continuance in honour. Written with the hand of her that is most bound to be,

" Your humble and obedient servant,

" ANNE BOLEYN."

The reader will find many other equally interesting letters of Anne, and the other parties engaged in the divorce, in Burnet.

cardinal's artifices to change his purpose, by wearing out his hopes of its being successful. Irritated almost to madness by the obstacles which papal chicanery had placed in the way of the gratification of his passion, he gave a willing ear to the suggestion, and vented his long-suppressed indignation upon the cardinal. The high opinion which he had so long entertained of Wolsey's capacity now only contributed to inflame his new feeling against him, and to hasten his downfall. He would not believe that the cardinal could fail if his fidelity went along with his zeal, and therefore thought that he must have been "juggling all this time in the business."

But the blow did not fall instantly, though Wolsey knew it was now inevitable. At the close of the legatine court one day, Henry ordered the cardinal to attend him at the palace of Bridewell adjoining. For an hour the indignant sovereign showered on the head of the devoted minister the most vehement abuse for the delay that had taken place in the business. Wolsey in vain attempted to justify his conduct. The king abruptly dismissed him, and the cardinal sought the respite of his own palace at Westminster. The bishop of Carlisle, who entered the barge with him at Blackfriars, remarked that "it was a very hot day."—"Yes," replied Wolsey, "and if you had been as much chafed as I have been within this hour, you would indeed say it was very hot."

Oppressed, exhausted, and heart-broken, the cardinal immediately went to bed on arriving at his residence (York-house, now Whitehall palace), but was almost as soon compelled to return to Bridewell, by the king's command, requiring the immediate interposition of the legates with the queen, then at the palace. He had here to encounter the mortifying taunts and vituperation of the enraged princess, upon whom he could make no favourable impression. Another interview with Henry to communicate the unsuccessful issue of his interposition finished this day's anxiety. A few days after Campeggio abruptly adjourned the court to October, without coming to any decision.

Nothing could exceed the surprise and indignation of the king at this proceeding. The whole court complained of the delay, and pressed the legates to give sentence. Campeggio said he could not till October. "Upon which the lords spake very high: and the duke of Suffolk, with great commotion, swore 'by the mass, that he saw it was true which had been commonly said, that never cardinal yet did good in England;' and so all the temporal lords went away in a fury, leaving the legates, Wolsey in particular, in no small perplexity." Wolsey, against whom Suffolk's declaration was wholly aimed, from this learned that the courtiers clearly saw that his fall was at hand. Nothing more, however, happened at this time, for the king immediately left town on a progress with his mistress.

The two cardinals waited on Henry at Grafton in Northamptonshire. Wolsey's pride and hopes received here their fatal blow, for the courtiers who attended the king no longer disguised their insolence and resentment, and knowing his disgrace to have been fixed upon, actually "laid many great wagers that his majesty would not speak with the lord cardinal." His mortifications did not end here. On reaching the entrance of the court, Campeggio was immediately conducted to an apartment prepared for him, and Wolsey, with dismay, heard that no order for his accommodation had been issued. The delicate and most considerate courtesy of sir Henry Norris, a young and favoured attendant of the king (who was not long afterwards executed for an alleged criminality with Anne Boleyn) in some degree relieved him from the embarrassments of his situation. The knight begged Wolsey to accept of his apartment, affecting to ascribe the manifest neglect of the cardinal to the limited arrangements of the king's present residence.

From Norris, Wolsey soon learned what was known at court of Henry's estrangement from his minister. A ray of sunshine, however, for a moment lit up Wolsey's fortunes. The cardinal was bidden to the royal presence, and was received courteously, even kindly. The presence

of the man who had so long maintained an ascendant over his affections, and in whom he had reposed such unlimited confidence, melted the stubborn heart of Henry, who ever acted in obedience to the passing impulse. He raised Wolsey from his kneeling posture, and leading him by the hand to the recess of a window, conversed with him long and earnestly. From the expressions, however, which reached the ear of Cavendish it should seem that Henry was accusing him of some deception in his conduct as minister. "How can that be? is not this your own hand?" said the king, plucking out of his bosom a letter or writing, and showing him the same. Wolsey was then dismissed to dinner, with the promise of another interview on the morrow. That interview, however, was not granted; for Anne Boleyn, who was urged by her uncle the duke of Norfolk, and her own inclination, to employ all her influence to prevent their enemy's return to favour, had engaged the amorous monarch in a sylvan excursion in a neighbouring park, and Wolsey never afterwards saw his royal master.

Scarcely had Campeggio separated from his colleague than his baggage was examined, Henry suspecting that Wolsey was transmitting through him the means of providing for himself abroad, in the event of his escaping from the kingdom. But a provision for a future day had never once crossed the cardinal's mind through his whole career: rapacity was in him a means of which lavish magnificence, and not griping avarice, was the sole end.

On his return to London, he opened the court of chancery with his wonted parade. It was his last exercise of the high functions of lord chancellor. The next morning he was waited on by the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the great seal demanded from him. He refused to deliver it up on a mere verbal order, and without a formal letter to that effect from the king's own hand. He probably expected that the reflection which attends the act of writing, and delay in the execution of a design, would induce Henry to soften, if not altogether

revoke, his order. He was disappointed: on the following day the two dukes bore away the insignia of his office, first presenting him with their master's written authority. He was at the same time commanded to give up York palace, built by himself on the property of the see of York, and to reside in Esher, adjoining Hampton Court, another palace, also built by him, belonging to the bishopric of Winchester.

Wolsey having taken a farewell survey of the costly furniture of his princely mansion, which exceeded in splendour any thing ever seen before in England (an inventory of it is still preserved in the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum), set out on his way to Esher. He was rowed in his barge to Putney, where his mules and horses awaited him. An incident occurred on this journey which is calculated to excite our disgust at his meanness; not the less so, perhaps, when his former overbearing haughtiness of deportment presents itself to our recollection. Not, indeed, that there is any thing inconsistent or unusual in this mixture of inordinate pride and base abjectness of nature. They are both the offspring of selfishness and hollowness of heart, —

> "Proud men are base, to compass their desire;
> They lowest crouch, that highest do aspire."

Scarcely had he proceeded on his mule, when sir Henry Norris rode up to him, and hailed him with the glad tidings, that "the king commanded his grace to be of good cheer, for that he was as much in his favour as he had ever been." These "good and comfortable" words were accompanied by a well-known ring, which Henry sent him as a certain token of his favour. Wolsey was at first overpowered by the extravagance of his transports of joy. He prostrated himself "on his knees in the mire," and with the wildest gestures of gratitude invoked the blessings of heaven on his royal master. The young knight, amazed at this abasement of the haughty prelate, knelt down beside him, and besought him to give credence to his message. But the other, almost choked

with emotion, could only ejaculate his broken thanks to his God and his king; showing thereby, observes Burnet, how mean a soul he had, and that, as he himself afterwards acknowledged, "he preferred the king's favour to God Almighty's." On parting, he gave Norris a piece of the "real holy cross," which he wore round his neck, as a token of his friendship. "Gentle Norris! if I were lord of a realm, the one half thereof were an insufficient reward to give you for your pains and right comfortable news. But, master Norris, consider with me that I have nothing left me but my clothes on my back; therefore I desire you to take this small reward of my hand." To the king he sent many messages of devotion; and recollecting, after taking leave of the knight, that Henry prized a favourite fool he had in his household, he recalled Norris, and bade the menial accompany him to the king; but the poor attached creature could with difficulty be compelled into his new service, and not till the cardinal had ordered six of his stoutest yeomen to enforce him; — a striking instance, says the chronicler, of his total regardlessness of the consequences to others of his attaining his end — self, (in this case, a forgetfulness, to say the least of it, of the lacerated feelings of affection of a poor creature who was all feeling,) even in affliction.

Wolsey spent some weeks at Esher, a prey to his fears and mortified ambition. As might be expected, the world, that had paid him such abject court in his prosperity, deserted him in this fatal reverse of his fortune. Wolsey was not himself prepared for what he conceived to be base ingratitude: it surprised and depressed him; and the same pride, unsupported by true dignity of character, which made him be vainly elated with his recent grandeur, made him now doubly sensitive to the humiliations of adversity. Under any circumstances he would be unfit for solitude: the glory more even than the power annexed to high station, and the gaze of the multitude being the breath of his nostrils; the calm contentment of private life was to him a sound of no mean-

ing. What, then, must have been his feelings in this first hour of his misery?

——— "Now the thought
Both of lost happiness (?) and lasting pain
Torments him."—

Baffled in all the schemes of his ambition; disgraced before his rivals; abandoned by the world, and forsaken by his royal master!—his heart was not yet sufficiently chastened by affliction to seek for consolation in its only true source — religion; but still clung with the despair of a lover to the hope of the royal mercy. His letter to Gardiner, whom he had the merit of bringing forward from obscurity, and who, excepting his other secretary, Cromwell, of all his followers, alone retained grateful respect for their benefactor in his fallen fortunes, bespeak the agony of his feelings. They are usually subscribed, "With a rude hand and sorrowful heart, T. Cardlis. Ebor. *miserrimus*," and are scarcely legible, from the excitement under which they seem to have been written.

But the cup was not yet filled to the brim: other crosses and sorrows were necessary to wean Wolsey from worldly ambition, and these were speedily inflicted on him. An information was filed against him by the attorney-general, for having, contrary to a statute of Richard II., called the Statute of Provisors, exercised legatine authority in England, and having procured bulls from Rome in that capacity. Wolsey confessed the indictment; but pleaded usage and ignorance of the statute, and threw himself on the king's mercy. Nothing could be more unjust and tyrannical than the prosecution of what Henry had himself all along openly sanctioned. The clergy at large were implicated in the information, and were compelled to purchase an indemnity with sums of money. Sentence was at once pronounced against the cardinal: he was declared to have incurred the penalties of a *præmunire*; that is, "that he was out of the king's protection, his lands and

goods forfeited, and that his person might be committed to custody."

This harsh treatment produced its usual effects on the public mind: the sight of fallen greatness, which, far more than that of fallen virtue, wins the sympathy of the multitude, converted the resentment and envy of the people into compassion, and even kindliness of feeling. The sentence, however, was not persisted in. Henry granted his prostrate ex-minister a free pardon, and reinstated him in the sees of York and Winchester. A wreck (to the value of 6374*l.*) of his immense property was restored to him soon after.

This brief kindness of the king was but the last flickering of his better feelings towards the cardinal. He had already promised Anne Boleyn that he would never see him more, and Wolsey knew too well that his address in personal conference was the only chance he had of regaining his master's favour. Henry found that he could do without him, both as a companion and as a minister; and, with the capricious selfishness of his temper, "whistled" him down the winds for ever. Immediately before he was forgiven the penalties of the "præmunire," he had ordered him to be indicted in the star-chamber,—a court which he himself had restored *, as a curb on the nobility, — for high treason. By that court he was handed over to the vengeance of parliament, and there formally attainted of high treason, in a bill containing forty-four articles of impeachment. His gross arbitrary outrages upon the constitution were

* Sir Thomas Smith (in his Commonwealth of England), secretary of state under Edward VI. and Elizabeth, informs us that the court of star-chamber "took augmentation and authority at the time that Cardinal Wolsey was chancellor of England, who of some was thought to have first devised that court, because that he, after some intermission by negligence of time, augmented the authority of it. The measure," he continues, "was marvellous necessary to repress the insolence of the noblemen and gentlemen of the north parts of England, who, being far from the king and the seat of justice, made almost, as it were, an ordinary war among themselves, and made their force their law, binding themselves, with their tenants and servants, to do or revenge injury one against another, as they listed."

On the antiquity of the star-chamber see the introductory volume of Brodie's History of the British Empire, and the first volume of Hallam's Constitutional History of England.

wholly overlooked in this attainder; for these were not the offences a parliament of Henry dared to punish, or that would incur his resentment; and the charges are chiefly against the abuses of his legatine authority, and his haughty deportment in the council. He was charged with having been the first to receive letters from the king's ministers abroad (a curious charge against a prime minister!); with having named himself along with the king, as if he had been his fellow (the *ego et rex meus* charge, which only betrays its framer's ignorance of the Latin idiom); with having whispered in the king's ear, whilst he laboured under a particular disease; with consuming too much time with a fair tale in the council; with allowing no opposition, and overwhelming it with "his accustomable words," so that the members were better hold their peace than speak; with having greatly overshadowed, for a long season, the king's honour; and with many other offences equally indicative of his prosecutors' malevolence, and of the impression which his pride and haughtiness had made on his contemporaries. The bill flew through the lords, by whom the cardinal was hated to a man; and was thrown out of the commons, as the reader of history is aware, through the zeal, eloquence, and honourable exertions of Cromwell. It was after the failure of this parliamentary impeachment that he was prosecuted, as we have narrated, under the Statute of Provisors.

One honourable trait in the character of Wolsey, which should have atoned for much of his sufferings, was brought into relief by the privations which he now endured at Esher — his affability and kindness to his servants and followers. Unable to pay them the usual stipend, he begged of them to provide themselves with a new master till fortune should have proved more auspicious. With tears most of them refused to leave "so kind a master" in his adversity. In this emergency, Cromwell suggested an expedient, of which he set the first example. He proposed a subscription among the chaplains and others whom the cardinal had provided

with livings. A common fund was immediately subscribed, which enabled him to pay off most of the arrears of his domestics' wages. This incident speaks volumes in favour of Cromwell's heart, and of his benefactor's natural disposition.

The health of Wolsey at length began to sink under his anxieties and privations, and the king was informed of his condition. Henry immediately sent his own physician to attend upon him. It was soon clear to Dr. Butt, (the physician's name) that unless he could "minister to a mind diseased," his skill would be fruitless; and he accordingly informed the king that the sunshine of the royal countenance would tend more to restore the patient than all the drugs in his dominions.

"'How doth yonder man, have you seen him?'—'Yea, sir,' quoth he.—'How do you like him?' quoth the king.—'Forsooth, sir,' quoth he, 'if you will have him dead, I warrant your grace he will be dead within these four days, if he receive no comfort from you shortly, and mistress Anne.'—'Marry,' quoth the king, 'God forbid that he should die. I pray you, good master Buttes, go again unto him, and do your cure upon him; for I would not lose him for twenty thousand pounds.'—'Then must your grace,' quoth master Buttes, 'send him first some comfortable message, as shortly as is possible.'—'Even so will I,' quoth the king, 'by you. And therefore make speed to him again, and ye shall deliver him from me this ring for a token of our good will and favour towards him (in the which ring was engraved the king's visage within a ruby, as lively counterfeit as was possible to be devised.) This ring he knoweth very well; for he gave me the same; and tell him, that I am not offended with him in my heart nothing at all, and that shall he perceive, and God send him life, very shortly. Therefore bid him be of good cheer, and pluck up his heart, and take no despair. And I charge you come not from him, until ye have brought him out of all danger of death.' And then spake he to mistress Anne, saying,

'Good sweetheart, I pray you at this my instance, as ye love us, to send the cardinal a token with comfortable words; and in so doing ye shall do us a loving pleasure.' She being not minded to disobey the king's earnest request, whatsoever she intended in her heart towards the cardinal; took incontinent her tablet of gold hanging at her girdle, and delivered it to master Buttes, with very gentle and comfortable words and commendations to the cardinal. And thus master Buttes departed, and made speedy return to Asher, to my lord cardinal; after whom the king sent doctor Clement, doctor Wotton, and doctor Cromer the Scot, to consult and assist master Buttes for my lord's health."

The influence of these cheering messages had very soon a salutary effect on the cardinal's indisposition. He was also allowed, for change of scene, to reside in the palace of Richmond, which the king gave him, in return for his magnificent present of Hampton Court, and some of his furniture and other property was returned to him. This was the last gleam of Henry's kindness for his favourite.

His enemies, however, were apprehensive of the possible consequences of his proximity to the royal residence, and therefore obtained an order for him to repair to his see of York, which he had never once visited since his consecration. The cardinal, accordingly, by slow journeys, proceeded to his archbishopric, and sojourned at Southwell, near Newark, while Cawood castle, the archiepiscopal palace, was undergoing repair. For the first time in his life, Wolsey now conducted himself in a manner worthy of a Christian clergyman, and gave to church dignitaries "a right good example how they might win men's hearts." He interested himself deeply in the concerns of the poor, reconciled their dissensions, and healed their resentments; and enforced the preaching of sermons adapted in their tone to their wants and feelings. To the gentry he was courteous and hospitable; to the lower classes kind and charitable; and, as a just consequence, reaped the invariable reward of such con-

duct, in the love and gratitude of the one, and the unfeigned respect and esteem of the other. This popularity hastened, if it did not occasion, his final ruin.

The cardinal was preparing for his installation on the morrow. About noon, just after he had himself dined, a tumult was heard in the hall of Cawood castle. He was informed by a domestic, that the hall was filled by the armed retainers of the earl of Northumberland, his former pupil, and of sir Walter Walshe, one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, and that the tumult was occasioned by his porter's refusing to give up to the earl the keys of the castle, which he demanded in the king's name. The cardinal affected to consider the visit as one of hospitality, and meeting his supposed guests on the great stairs, chided them for taking him by surprise. The table was ordered to be replenished with such provisions as the castle afforded. The earl, confounded, and perhaps awed by his former habits of reverence, at length made himself up to say, in a faint and trembling voice, "My lord, I arrest you of high treason." The cruelty of this last attack was too much for the shattered frame of the cardinal—it killed him.

The narrative of Cavendish, who stayed with his master till his last moments, from this point to the conclusion, is full of deep moral pathos. Before Wolsey set out for his trial, he was kept in close confinement in his own castle; and Cavendish alone was admitted to hold communication with him. The cardinal, on seeing him, fell into a passion of tears, which, says he, "would have caused the flintiest heart to have relented and burst for sorrow." His progress to Doncaster bore testimony to the excellence of his brief archiepiscopal administration: his domestics, and the poor along the road, shed tears as he approached; and on their knees invoked blessings on his head, and vengeance on his enemies. He was so weak and spirit-broken, that he was obliged to rest eighteen days at Sheffield-park, where he was most humanely treated by its owner, the earl of Shrewsbury. He was there informed that sir William

Kingston, the constable of the Tower, was coming to conduct him to London. On hearing the name of "Kingston" Wolsey was overcome by grief and consternation; for his mind, weakened by disease and calamity, and imbued with a portion of the superstitious spirit of the age, instantly saw in the name the fulfilment of a prophecy, that he should end his days near "Kingston;" on which account he never would pass through the town of Kingston, that lay between London and his residence at Esher.

The remainder of his story is quickly told. By great care he was brought to the abbey of Leicester, which he entered by torch-light, observing, with a true presentiment, to the abbot and monks, who received him with great reverence, "Father abbot, I am come hither to lay my bones among you." He was immediately placed in bed, whence he never rose. His death was expected that night; but he rallied in the morning, and foretold, with the prophetic accuracy of the dying, that he should expire at eight o'clock that evening.

"Upon Monday in the morning, as I stood by his bed-side, about eight of the clock, the windows being close shut, having wax lights burning upon the cupboard, I beheld him, as me seemed, drawing fast to his end. He perceiving my shadow upon the wall by his bed-side, asked who was there? 'Sir, I am here,' quoth I.—'How do you?' quoth he to me.—'Very well, sir,' quoth I, 'if I might see your grace well.'—'What is it of the clock?' said he to me.—'Forsooth, sir,' said I, 'it is past eight of the clock in the morning.'—'Eight of the clock?' quoth he, 'that cannot be;' rehearsing divers times, 'eight of the clock, eight of the clock; nay, nay;' quoth he at the last, 'it cannot be eight of the clock: for by eight of the clock ye shall lose your master: for my time draweth near that I must depart out of this world.' With that master doctor Palmes, a worshipful gentleman, being his chaplain and ghostly father, standing by, bade me secretly demand of him if he would be shriven, and to be in a

readiness towards God, whatsoever should chance. At whose desire I asked him that question. 'What have you to do to ask me any such question?' quoth he, and began to be very angry with me for my presumption; until at the last master doctor took my part, and talked with him in Latin, and so pacified him."

Kingston entered, and bade him good morning. "I tarry, master Kingston, but the will and pleasure of God, to render unto him my simple soul into his divine hand." After a pause, and after having explained the fatal nature of his disease, dysentery, he addressed himself again to Kingston as follows: —

"'Master Kingston, my disease is such that I cannot live; I have had some experience in my disease, and thus it is: I have a flux with a continual fever; the nature whereof is this, that if there be no alteration with me of the same within eight days, then must either ensue excoriation of the entrails, or frenzy, or else present death; and the best thereof is death. And as I suppose, this is the eighth day: and if ye see in me no alteration, then is there no remedy (although I may live a day or twaine) but death, which is the best remedy of the three.'—'Nay, sir, in good faith,' quoth master Kingston, 'you be in such dolor and pensiveness, doubting that thing that indeed ye need not to fear, which maketh you much worse than ye should be.'—Well, well, master Kingston,' quoth he, 'I see the matter against me how it is framed; *but if I had served God as diligently* * *as I have done the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs.* Howbeit, this is the just reward that I must receive for my worldly diligence and pains that I have had to do him service; only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not regarding my godly duty. Wherefore I pray you, with all my heart, to have me most humbly commended unto his royal majesty; beseeching him in my behalf to call to his most gracious remembrance all matters proceeding between him and me from

* The reader will perceive how closely Shakspeare has adhered to the text of the chronicler. But this fidelity is characteristic of all his historical plays.

the beginning of the world unto this day, and the progress of the same: and most chiefly in the weighty matter yet depending (meaning the matter newly began between him and good queen Katherine); then shall his conscience declare, whether I have offended him or no. He is sure a prince of a royal courage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will put the loss of one half of his realm in danger. For I assure you I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees, the space of an hour or two, to persuade him from his will and appetite: but I could never bring to pass to dissuade him therefrom. Therefore, master Kingston, if it chance hereafter, you to be one of his privy-council, as for your wisdom and other qualities ye are meet to be, I warn you to be well advised and assured what matter ye put in his head, for ye shall never put it out again.

" ' And say furthermore, that I request his grace, in God's name, that he have a vigilant eye to depress this new pernicious sect of Lutherans, that it do not increase within his dominions through his negligence, in such a sort, as that he shall be fain at length to put harness upon his back to subdue them; as the king of Bohemia who had good game, to see his rude commons (then infected with Wickliffe's heresies) to spoil and murder the spiritual men and religious persons of his realm; the which fled to the king and his nobles for succour against their frantic rage; of whom they could get no help of defence or refuge, but (they) laughed them to scorn, having good game at their spoil and consumption, not regarding their duties nor their own defence.—

" ' Master Kingston, farewell. I can no more, but wish all things to have good success. My time draweth on fast. I may not tarry with you. And forget not, I pray you, what I have said and charged you withal: for when I am dead, ye shall peradventure remember my words much better.' And even with these words he began to draw his speech at length, and his tongue to

fail; his eyes being set in his head, whose sight failed him. Then we began to put him in remembrance of Christ's passion; and sent for the abbot of the place to anneal him, who came with all speed, and ministered unto him all the service to the same belonging; and caused also the guard to stand by, both to hear him talk before his death, and also to witness of the same; and incontinent the clock struck eight, at which time he gave up the ghost, and thus departed he this present life."

He expired, as he had predicted, as the clock struck eight, on the 28th of November, 1530, in the 60th year of his age.

It is not easy, such is the force of the compassion that the sight of the sufferings of fallen greatness awakes in our bosoms, to regain the calm impartiality which the dignity and use of biography, and the interests of of truth and justice, require. But our task of reprobation is rendered the less difficult, by having been in a great degeee anticipated; for we have endeavoured to hold up Wolsey to the moral gaze of the reader as a man selfish, vain-glorious, mean, haughty, and inordinately ambitious; as a statesman, arbitrary, self-centred, and unprincipled; and as a churchman arrogant and dissolute. It remains, therefore, but to direct the reader's attention to the merits and less unfavourable points of Wolsey's character, and to those circumstances which may be deemed palliative of his vices and failings.

The ends which Wolsey had in view throughout his career were many of them laudable, and few of them blamable: so that, if we consider them only without taking the means he employed into account, we shall arrive at the conclusion that he is well entitled to the admiration of posterity. On the other hand, he was ever regardless of the means through whose agency he attained, or might attain, the object of his ambition: so that if our estimate of his claims to our favorable suffrages be determined by them alone, without looking to the end he may have had in view, his memory will be

justly regarded with detestation. In the outset of his career, we saw him fraudulently apply the funds of his college to a use different from that for which they were intended; but then, it might be said, his end was to adorn and dignify that college by ornamenting its chapel with a tower. He simulated and dissimulated, and fawned himself into power; but then he was urged by the infirmity of noble minds, ambition, and would wield that power advantageously for his country. He involved England in constant war, regardless of its true interests, and of the real grandeur of his master; but then his end was the popedom, and, like the cardinal Amboise, he persuaded himself that when he had reached that summit of his ambition, he would promote the welfare of his native country, and evince his gratitude to his sovereign. He oppressed and pillaged the poorer and defenceless monks; but it was only to encourage literature and check immorality. He was rapacious, but not to hoard; profuse, but only in order that he might support the dignity becoming his station. Arbitrary laws checked the freedom of the lower orders in the most ordinary occurrences of life; but the end was public order, and their own good. And if he levied heavy loans and benevolences, and imposed taxes without the consent of parliament, it was to prevent his great designs for the general weal from being abandoned before their beneficial results were made manifest.

In this spirit have his more zealous admirers endeavoured to vindicate his conduct, forgetful that the same sort of reasoning would furnish an apology for the foulest outrages upon the rights of a free people that are recorded in history. The best apology that can be offered for the personal vices of Wolsey was his lowly origin and defective moral education, and consequent absence of true dignity of character. To these may be ascribed his love of ostentatious pomp, and vindictiveness* in his

* His treatment of sir Amias Paulet, and his allowing his resentment to aid in causing the death of Buckingham, are in themselves examples of the vindictiveness of Wolsey's temper. But there are others of a still more ignoble cast, such as the unrelenting rigour with which he persecuted the

prosperity, his meanness in the reverse of his fortunes, and the absence of the

> — "High disdain from sense of injured merit,"

and of the

> "Unconquerable will,
> And courage never to submit or yield,"

which have flung somewhat of the glory of the "Archangel ruined" over the fall of the haughty Strafford.

The best apology for the arbitrariness of his government is the disposition of his master, who, relieved by his death from one that "often kneeled before him for three hours together, to persuade him from his will and appetite," became daily more ferocious, tyrannical, and blood-thirsty, affording a striking contrast in favour of Wolsey's ascendency and administration. Had the cardinal had the inestimable advantage of a sound moral education, and, as a consequence, had his ambition been directed by a spirit more worthy of the true dignity of human nature, his labours might have conferred incalculable benefits on his country; for he lived in an age which his enlightened views far outstepped, and which presented an ample and fruitful soil for the employment of his various and splendid abilities. To him, however, England is indebted for the first notion of a vigorous police — of a simple and regular administration of justice. The superiority of her navy also is much indebted to his sagacity in directing the attention of Henry VIII. to the "empire of the sea;" and, notwithstanding his questionable principles of economy, his name should be held in respect as one of the earliest cultivators of our commercial pre-eminence. In him literature and learned men ever found a generous and a munificent patron; and the College of Physicians to this day bears testimony to his well-intentioned zeal in

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poet-laureate Shelton, for inditing of some stupid satirical lines on the cardinal's birth and pompous bearing, and his imprisonment of one John Roo, the author of a "disguising" enacted by the young lawyers of Gray's Inn, which, though written upwards of twenty years, gave offence to Wolsey by its allusion to state affairs.

the improvement of medical science, and through it of the general well-being.

To conclude, had the moral man been less defective, Wolsey might have been regarded as a benefactor of his species; as it is, regard to truth compels us to say, in the words of his biographer—"Here is the end and fall of pride and arrogancy."

CRANMER.

1489—1555.

Thomas Cranmer, the first archbishop of Canterbury that "made a defection from the papal chair," was the son of a gentleman of "right ancient family*" in Nottinghamshire, and was born in Aslacton, in that county, on the 2d of July, 1489. He received his early education at what we may call the grammar-school of his native village, under a "rude and severe parish clerk, of whom he learned little, and endured much;" a circumstance that may help to explain to us much of the timid flexibility of his character in after-life. At the age of fourteen he was entered of Jesus College, Cambridge, of which he in time became a fellow, and where he continued for sixteen years, a laborious student in the learning usually taught in the universities, and in the classic and sacred literature, which, by means of the lately invented art of printing, and the zeal of Erasmus, were just then making their way into our schools and colleges. Though he had devoted three years of this course of reading to the study of the Scriptures, it should seem that he was not originally intended for the church; for he is said to have excelled in the more profane accomplishments of a gentleman of that age, such as hunting and hawking; and he forfeited his fellowship by marrying shortly after he had taken his degree of master of arts. The Reformation had not yet received such countenance in England—where the celibacy of the clergy was, long after its adoption, more or less strictly insisted upon—as to admit of the marriage of an ecclesiastic; nor did Cranmer possess the boldness of temper necessary to him who, unsupported by wealth or family influence, would take the lead in setting established rules and usages at defiance. The death of his wife, however,

* Strype's Memorials of T. Cranmer, which we have chiefly followed in the text.

within a year after his marriage, enabled him to resume his fellowship; he having, in the interim, filled the common lectureship of Magdalen, then Buckingham, college,—an office not incompatible with the state of wedlock. From this period he appears to have directed his views towards the church as a profession, encouraged, no doubt, by his deservedly high university reputation. In 1523 he received the degree of doctor in divinity; and soon after was appointed to the theological lectureship of his own college, and examiner of candidates for holy orders. The gentle affability of his manners, his moderation and disinterestedness, and the extent of his erudition, made Cranmer to be universally esteemed by all whom his new offices brought him in contact with; and he probably might have spent the remainder of his life in the privacy of his college—more congenial with his own retiring and studious disposition than the bustle and excitement of those momentous events which have made him a subject of history—but for one of those accidents which occur in the career of every man who rises eminently above his fellows.

In 1529 the "sweating sickness" having broken out in Cambridge, Cranmer retired to Waltham Abbey in Essex, to the house of a Mr. Cressy, whose sons were his pupils at the university. It happened that the king, Henry VIII.,—then returning from a progress which he had made accompanied by Anne Boleyn, soon after the adjournment of the legatine commission on the matter of the divorce to Rome,—at this time spent a night at Waltham. His suite, as usual, was billeted in the different houses in the neighbourhood by the customary authorities; his secretary, Gardiner, and his almoner, Fox, being allotted to Mr. Cressy's residence, where they met Cranmer at supper. The conversation turned upon the then absorbing topic of public conversation, the king's divorce, and Cranmer was pressed for his opinion. He replied, that it appeared to him the better and speedier mode, both to appease the king's conscience and to compel the pope into acquiescence,

would be to take the opinion of the learned of Europe on the main question—"Whether a man may marry his brother's wife or no?" by the authority of the Scriptures and the canon law. If the divines of the several universities throughout Christendom approved of the king's marriage with Catharine, his remorses would of course cease: if, on the other hand, they viewed the matter in the same light with Henry, and declared the marriage null and void, the pope would find it difficult to refuse the solicitation of so great a monarch, and must needs give judgment in his favour. Henry was delighted with the proposal on its being next day communicated to him, and sent eagerly for Cranmer to come to court, observing, in his usual coarse appositeness of expression, "The man has got the sow by the right ear." This favourable impression was confirmed by the proofs of good sense and learning which Cranmer gave in his conference with the king on the feasibility of the plan which he had proposed at Waltham. He was commanded to put his arguments in favour of the divorce in writing; appointed one of the royal chaplains; and placed in the family of Thomas earl of Wiltshire, father of the ill-fated Anne Boleyn. He was now considered a "rising churchman," and as the probable successor to the influence and grandeur of Wolsey, then in the first stage of his fall.

Having finished his treatise on the divorce, which is mainly directed against the pope's power of granting a dispensation for the marriage of Henry with his brother's widow, Cranmer was employed by the king as the most fitting instrument to carry his own scheme into effect. The opinion of the learned on the main question of the divorce which he had recommended was ordered to be taken under his own inspection. He began his mission at his own university, but met with indifferent success, chiefly, according to Burnet, because his Lutheran bias was there best known: "besides that, Anne Boleyn had, in the duchess of Alençon's

court (who inclined to the reformation), received such impressions as made them fear that her greatness and Cranmer's preferment would encourage heresy, to which the universities were furiously averse; and therefore they did resist all conclusions that might promote the divorce." He, however, met with better success in his consultations with the divines of France, Italy, and Germany, a majority of whom, by the force of his arguments and of those of the other agents in the embassy, and not improbably by bribes and promises when fair means would not avail, was induced to give an opinion favourable to the king's wishes.

Armed thus with the authority of the most learned men of the age, Henry sought the papal sanction for his intended divorce. The earl of Wiltshire, attended by Cranmer and a council of divines, was deputed to lay before the "Holy Father" the opinion of the chief universities of Europe in his master's favour, and to present to him a letter from the principal English nobility, recommending their sovereign's cause to his friendly decision, and threatening him with the loss of the allegiance of England to the see of Rome in the event of his refusal. At the same time Cranmer had his treatise against the validity of the marriage with Catharine presented to the pontiff, and offered to maintain its tenets, by fair argument, openly before the papal council against all comers; a proof of his zeal and boldness, to which he was mainly indebted for his promotion soon afterwards to the see of Canterbury.

Nothing could be more inopportune, both as to time and place, to Clement than this embassy. He had just been with the emperor at Bologna, successfully treating for the restoration of those possessions, part of the patrimony of St. Peter, which had been held by the imperial troops since the memorable sack of Rome. Fear as well as policy forbade his exciting the anger of Charles, whose pride made him indignantly hostile to the intended outrage upon the honour of his family. On the other hand, he was well disposed towards

Henry; and but for his terror of the emperor's arms, would gladly have adopted any expedient that might relieve both from their anxiety and embarrassments. As it was, he received the ambassadors most graciously, and promised to act as favourably in their master's affair as his conscience would permit. Cranmer he complimented by appointing him his penitentiary for England and Ireland. The ambassadors next proceeded to explain their business personally to the emperor, but were still more unsuccessful. Charles's anger burst forth at the sight of the father of her whom he conceived to be the immediate cause of his aunt's intended degradation. To Cranmer alone would he pay the least attention, haughtily imposing silence on the earl of Wiltshire. "Stop, sir," said he; "allow your colleagues to speak;—you are a party in the cause." Through his threats and influence, Clement soon after issued an inhibitory brief on the whole proceedings; the proximate occasion, as the reader is aware, of the overthrow of the papal supremacy in England.

Cranmer did not return to England with the earl of Wiltshire, but proceeded to Germany, where he resided for nearly two years, endeavouring to convince the Lutheran divines of the nullity of the king' marriage with his brother's widow; and conducting embassies with the elector of Saxony and other protestant princes. But he seems to have made but a slight impression on those theologians; chiefly, it is said, because they had strong doubts of the purity of Henry's motives, and of the sincerity of his alleged scruples. They, however, were more successful in imbuing him with their principles of religion, and in preparing him for the sacred office of head of the protestant church of England. Though a spark of the flame which Luther and the other reformers had kindled in Saxony and Switzerland had reached him in his cloister at Cambridge, prompting him to make the Holy Volume the standard and the source, the beginning and the end, of his faith; it was to his conferences at this time with the German divines, particu-

larly Osiander and Bucer, that he was indebted (not at once, but by degrees,) for a rule of belief, scriptural in its basis, and unalloyed by papal superstition.

The reputation of Cranmer would have been more pure and unquestioned, had the first decided proof of his conviction of the scriptural validity of the religious tenets and practices of the reformers been one less involving his personal gratification. As a catholic clergyman,—he was archdeacon of Taunton,—he was bound by a vow of celibacy; and though the study of the gospel soon taught him that this obligation was unwarranted, as being unscriptural, he should not have violated it without an explicit renouncement of all allegiance to the see of Rome. But the permission to marry seems to have been the great lure to many of the clergy at this time to adopt the principles of the reformation, and to have been eagerly embraced by them as a compensation for the loss of their extravagant wealth and privileges. Cranmer married a kinswoman of his friend Osiander; an act of rebellion to the papal jurisdiction, which, being unavowed, exposed him in the sequel to many unworthy shifts and equivocations. The first of these was consequent upon his consecration as archbishop of Canterbury.

While Cranmer was advocating the king's divorce to the German divines, and fitting himself to be the guardian of the reformation in his native country, it was notified to him that the judgment or the partiality of his sovereign had appointed him to the metropolitan see of England, then vacant by the death of archbishop Warham. Many circumstances united in recommending him thus signally to the favour of Henry; none, perhaps, more influentially than his zeal and boldness in maintaining the royal cause at Rome and in the continental universities, and the friendship of Anne Boleyn and her family. The first announcement, however, of his new dignity alarmed more than it gratified him. By his marriage he had, to all intents and purposes, rebelled against the pope's authority; and yet, as the king had not yet de-

termined on severing for ever the English connection with Rome, as archbishop of Canterbury, he should solicit the usual bulls of consecration, and take the usual oath of canonical obedience to the chair of St. Peter; acts, moreover, implying an observance of his vow of celibacy. He hesitated: he perhaps resolved upon declining the proffered honour.

> —— "He would be great;
> Was not without ambition; but without
> The illness should attend it. What he would highly,
> That would he *holily*."

He knew that to announce his marriage to Henry would be fatal to his election; for that monarch continued till his last breath to enforce the observance of clerical celibacy with the stake and halter. On the other hand, rebel as he was in heart and deed to the usurped authority of the bishops of Rome, how could he reconcile it to his conscience to swear canonical obedience to that authority, and thereby proclaim either the nullity of his marriage or the violation of his vow? In this dilemma he had recourse to an artifice, which, as bishop Burnet justly remarks, "agreed better with the maxims of canonists and casuists than with Cranmer's sincerity and integrity;" namely, a protest made in the Chapter House of St. Stephen, before four "*authentica persona, et testibus fide dignis*," before consecration,—in the absence and without the knowledge of the party most interested, — that he did not intend, by his oath to the pope, "to restrain himself from any thing to which he was bound by his duty to God or the king, or from taking any part in any reformation of the English church which he might judge to be required." Having, in an inner apartment, made this protestation, he was publicly consecrated, took the oath of canonical obedience, and received the papal pallium. The title of archbishop of Canterbury was changed, after Henry had assumed to himself the ecclesiastical supremacy, to that of primate and metropolitan of all England.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the moral character of this transaction. If such a protest be invested with

any validity, oaths cease to bind, and truth and sincerity in the affairs of life are no longer attainable. It cannot be alleged, in palliation of this first deviation from the strict path of rectitude, that it was the unavoidable result of circumstances; for Cranmer was not, and could not, be forced into the archiepiscopal chair; and therefore voluntarily entailed upon himself all the moral consequences of his elevation. The truth is, want of firmness was the "vicious mole" in Cranmer's character. He was from nature virtuously inclined and candid; but he would be great, and could not resist the opportunity. Such conduct produced its inevitable results: it destroyed that consciousness of inflexible dignity of purpose which is at once the offspring and the safeguard of moral integrity. Cranmer felt that he could not stand erect in the independence of an uncompromising spirit before his sovereign, and was thereby reduced into an unworthy compliance with all the caprices and vicious mandates of that sovereign's will. Hence the equivocations and shifts, and even persecutions, in which he was made most unwillingly instrumental during the remainder of Henry's reign. And thus—

> —— "The stamp of *one defect* —
> Being nature's livery, or fortune's star —
> His *virtues* else (be they as pure as grace,
> As infinite as man may undergo)
> Shall, in the general censure, take corruption
> From that particular fault."

Henry had, at the instigation of Cromwell, on the failure of his hopes of obtaining the papal sanction for his divorce, renounced all allegiance to the see of Rome, and constituted himself supreme head of the church of England. It was, therefore, truly gratifying to him to possess a primate so much after his own heart—so far as renouncing the pontifical authority was concerned—as Cranmer. He now resolved to make the new archbishop, in virtue of his ecclesiastical office, pronounce the marriage of Catharine null, and that which he had lately concluded in private with Anne Boleyn

valid; and the issue of the former illegitimate, and that of the latter, as a matter of course, to be lawfully begotten in wedlock. A convocation was then sitting upon the two main questions involved in the intended divorce. Cranmer took his seat as head of the ecclesiastical body in England, and demanded the votes. The result was favourable to the king by large majorities. The archbishop then craved the royal permission to examine and determine the great cause of the divorce; stating that his conscience impelled him to the step, to avoid the evils of a scandalous marriage, and of a consequently doubtful succession. Henry, with farcical solemnity, made a virtue of acceding to the request; at the same time reminding the primate that he was nothing more than the principal minister belonging to the spiritual jurisdiction of the crown, and that the sovereign had no superior on earth, and was not subject to the laws of any earthly creature. The subsequent proceedings, as narrated by our historians, are well known. We shall, therefore, merely quote Cranmer's own account of them, in a letter (published by Mr. Ellis in the first series of his historical collection), to the English ambassador at the court of Charles, which, besides being less known to the general reader, contains other interesting particulars.

After some prefatory complimentary remarks, he goes on:—"And fyrste as towchyng the small determynacion and concludyng of the matter of devorse betwene my lady Kateren and the kyngs grace, whyche said matter after the convocacion in that behalf hadde determyned, and aggreed accordyng to the former consent of the vniversities, yt was thought convenient by the kyng and his lernyd councell that I shoulde repayre unto Dunstable, whyche ys within iiij myles vnto Amptell, where the said lady Kateren kepeth her howse, and there to call her before me, to here the fynall sentence in this said mateir. Notwithstanding she would not att all obey thereunto, for whan she was by doctour Lee cited to appear by a daye, she utterly refused the same, sayinge that inasmoche as her cause was before the

pope she would have none other judge; and therefore would not take me for her judge. Nevertheless the viiith daye of Maye, according to the said appoyntment, I came vnto Dunstable, my lorde of Lyncolne beying assistante vnto me, and my lorde of Wyncehester, &c. with diuerse other lernyd in the lawe beying councillours in the lawe for the king's parte: and soe these at our commyng kept a courte for the apperance of the said lady Kateren, when were examyned certeyn witnes whyche testified that she was lawfully cited and called to appere, whome for fawte of apperance was declared contumax; procedyng in the said cause agaynste her *in pœnam contumacium*, as the processe of the lawe thereunto belongeth; whyche contynewed xv dayes after our cummyng thither. And the morrow after Assension daye I gave finall sentence therein, howe that it was indispensable for the pope to lycense any such marieges." The archbishop next proceeds to give an account of queen Anne's coronation, but at too great length for our pages. With respect to his having been present at her marriage, which Mr. Hume, on the authority of lord Herbert, erroneously asserts, he says, "But nowe, sir, you may nott ymagyn that this coronacion was before her mariege; for she was maried muche about Sainte Paule's daye last, as the condicion thereof dothe well appere by reason she ys nowe sumwhat bygg with chylde. Notwithstanding yt hath byn reported thorowyte a greate parte of the realme that I maried her; whyche was playnly false, for I myself knewe not thereof a fortenyght after yt was donne."

The remainder of this letter is curious, as showing the cool indifference with which a constitutionally humane man of the 16th century consigns to the stake his fellow-creatures for doctrines which, it is to be hoped for the honour of human nature, he then did not believe, but for the denial of which he in the next reign doomed others to the same horrible punishment. "Other newyes have we none notable," he says, "but that one Fryth, whyche was in the Tower in pryson,

was appointed by the kyng's grace to be examyned before me, my lordes of London, Wynchester, and Suffolk, my lord chancellour, and my lorde of Wylteshere, whose opynion was so notably erroniouse, that we culde not dyspache hym, but was fayne to leve hym to the determynacion of his ordinarye, whyche ys the bishop of London. His said opynyon ys of suche nature that he thoughte it nat necessary to be beleued as an article of our faythe, that there ys the very corporall presence of Christe within the oste and sacramente of the alter, and holdeth of this poynte muste (much) after the opynion of Oecolampodious. And suerly I myself sent for hym iij or iiij times, to persuade him to leve that his imaginacion, but for all that we coulde do therein he woulde not applye to any counsaile, notwithstandying nowe he ys at a fynale ende with all examinacions; for my lorde of London hathe gyven sentance, and delyuered hym to the secular power, where he looketh euery daye to *goo unto the fyre*. And there is also condempned with hym one Andrew, a taylour, for the self same opynion." The reader, perhaps, need not be reminded that both these unfortunate men went "unto the fyre."

Henry had now been three years wedded to Anne Boleyn, with as much of domestic felicity as his brutal nature could permit his enjoying. During that time the "new learning" (as the reformation doctrines were then designated) had been silently diffusing itself, chiefly by means of the influence indirectly exercised in its favour, at the instigation of Cranmer and Latimer, by the young queen. Cranmer had been an inmate of the family of the earl of Wiltshire, and had there an opportunity of acquainting himself with Anne Boleyn's virtues and disposition, and of strengthening the predilection for the Lutheran doctrines which she had early acquired from the celebrated Margaret de Valois. In annulling the king's former marriage, and pronouncing the validity of his present, the archbishop felt he was advancing the cause of the reformation. But Henry had now conceived a new passion; his affections for Anne

had been effaced by the charms of Jane Seymour: the former, therefore, must be got rid of, to make way on the throne for her rival. A trial took place, and, as a matter of course in this reign of base obsequiousness to the most cruelly selfish of tyrants, guilty or innocent, conviction and execution soon followed.

Cranmer had been staying at the archiepiscopal palace at Croydon when Anne was arrested. The next day he received the royal mandate to repair immediately to Lambeth, with an injunction not to approach the presence till he was expressly desired. The message produced the effect for which it was intended: it intimidated him, and thereby rendered him the more pliant instrument of the king's pleasure. A letter which he addressed to Henry the day after his being commanded to confine himself to his palace will best explain his conduct and feelings. We shall give it entire, as an elaborate painting of his mind, and because it has been the subject of much contrariety of opinion: those who admire his character appealing to it as a proof of his chivalrous fidelity and courage; those who do not, as a striking testimony of his time-serving timidity. Probably the reader will arrive at the conclusion that it neither deserves all the praises of the one, nor all the censures of the other; and that its chief merit is its cautious ingenuity. We quote from Burnet.

"Pleaseth it your most noble grace to be advertised, that at your grace's commandment by Mr. secretary's letters, written in your grace's name, I came to Lambeth yesterday, and do there remain to know your grace's farther pleasure. And forasmuch as, without your grace's commandment, I dare not, contrary to the contents of the said letters, presume to come unto your grace's presence, nevertheless, of my most bounden duty, I can do no less than most humbly to desire your grace, by your great wisdom, and by the assistance of God's help, somewhat to suppress the deep sorrow of your grace's heart, and to take all adversities of God's hand both patiently and thankfully. I cannot deny but your

grace hath great causes, many ways, of lamentable heaviness; and also that, in the wrongful estimation of the world, your grace's honour of every part is highly touched (whether the things that commonly be spoken of be true or not), that I remember not that ever Almighty God sent unto your grace any like occasion to try your grace's constancy throughout, whether your highness can be content to take of God's hand as well things displeasant as pleasant. And if he find in your most noble heart such an obedience unto his will, that your grace, without murmuration and overmuch heaviness, do accept all adversities, not less thanking him than when all things succeed after your grace's will and pleasure, nor less procuring his glory and honour; then, I suppose your grace did never thing more acceptable unto him since your first governance of this your realm. And, moreover, your grace shall give unto him occasion to multiply and increase his graces and benefits unto your highness, as he did unto his most faithful servant Job; unto whom, after his great calamities and heaviness, for his obedient heart, and willing acceptation of God's scourge and rod, *addidit ei Dominus cuncta duplicia.*

"And if it be true that is openly reported of the queen's grace, if men had a right estimation of things, they should not esteem any part of your grace's honour to be touched thereby, but her honour only to be clearly disparaged. And I am in such a perplexity, that my mind is clean amazed: for I never had better opinion in woman than I had in her; which maketh me to think that she should not be culpable. And again, I think your highness would not have gone so far, except she had surely been culpable. Now I think that your grace best knoweth, that, next unto your grace, I was most bound unto her of all creatures living. Wherefore, I most humbly beseech your grace, to suffer me in that, which both God's law, nature, and also her kindness bindeth me unto; that is, that I may, with your grace's favour, wish and pray for her, that she may

declare herself inculpable and innocent. And if she be found capable, considering your grace's goodness towards her, and from what condition your grace of your only mere goodness took her, and set the crown upon her head, I repute him not your grace's faithful servant and subject, nor true unto the realm, that would not desire the offence without mercy to be punished, to the example of all other. And as I loved her not a little, for the love which I judged her to bear towards God and his gospel; so, if she be proved culpable, there is not one that loveth God and his gospel that ever will favour her, but must hate her above all other; and the more they favour the gospel, the more they will hate her: for there never was creature in our time that so much slandered the gospel. And God hath sent her this punishment, for that she feignedly hath professed this gospel in her mouth, and not in heart and deed. And though she have offended so, that she hath deserved never to be reconciled unto your grace's favour, yet Almighty God hath manifestly declared his goodness towards your grace, and never offended you. But your grace, I am sure, acknowledgeth that you have offended him. Wherefore I trust that your grace will bear no less entire favour unto the truth of the gospel than you did before: forasmuch as your grace's favour to the gospel was not led by affection unto her, but by zeal unto the truth. And thus I beseech Almighty God, whose gospel hath ordained your grace to be defended of, ever to preserve your grace from all evil, and to give you at the end the promise of his gospel. From Lambeth, the 3d day of May."

[Cranmer had written, but not despatched this letter, when he was summoned to a conference by the lord chancellor and other peers, who stated to him the facts which, they said, could be proved against the queen. He therefore, in a postscript, added as follows]: —

"After I had written this letter unto your grace, my lord chancellor, &c. sent for me to come unto the star-chamber; and there declared unto me such things as

your grace's pleasure was they should make me privy unto. For the which I am most bounden unto your grace. And what communication we had therein, I doubt not but they will make the true report thereof to your grace. I am exceedingly sorry that such faults can be proved by the queen as I heard of their relation. But I am, and ever shall be, your faithful subject.

"Your grace's

"Humble subject and chaplain,

"THOMAS CANTUARIENSIS."

The writer of this letter, it is plain, only awaits the king's commands as to the side on which he should array himself; though it is equally evident that his inclination went to assert the innocence of her to whom, next to his sovereign, he "was most bound of all creatures living." He had pronounced the divorce between Henry and Catharine, and thereby was a great instrument in destroying the papal supremacy in England. He had confirmed, by his archiepiscopal authority, the marriage of Anne; and by so doing, he was persuaded, favoured the spread of gospel truth and pure religion. He was now commanded to declare that that marriage "was, and always had been, null and void;" and that, as a necessary consequence, his god-child, the princess Elizabeth, should be no longer reputed legitimate. He dared not hesitate. After one of those solemn mockeries of the forms of justice, designated trials, which abound in this monstrous reign, Cranmer, "having God alone before his eyes," dissolved the marriage of Henry and Anne Boleyn. A similar, but fortunately less bloody, farce was performed a very few years after, when the king wished to get rid of Anne of Cleves. In obedience to the faintly expressed wishes of her disgusted husband, the archbishop and chancellor, at the head of a deputation, humbly solicited their gracious master's permission to submit to his consideration a subject of great delicacy and importance. Henry, having, he said, "no other object in view than the glory of God, the welfare of the

realm, and the triumph of truth," consented, on the condition that they would not propose any thing to him unreasonable and unjust. The subject was then cautiously broached, as arising solely from their own conscientious scruples; and, in perfect keeping with the farcical hypocrisy of the whole proceeding, the marriage was declared null and void, because "the king had been deceived by the exaggerated accounts of Anne's beauty, and had not given his inward assent to the contract." And yet this man was popular with the mass of his subjects, and is not without his eulogists even in the present day!

But it was not alone in the matter of wife-murder, or other civil exercises of the royal prerogative, that, during this reign, the will or caprice of the monarch was the sole law and measure. His

"Sic volo, sic jubeo; — stet pro ratione voluntas,"

extended even to the consciences of his subjects. By an arrogant exertion of power, not to be paralleled in the annals of oriental despotism, Henry made his own theological tenets — such as they were then, or "*hereafter might be*" — the exclusive test and standard of religious orthodoxy. From his dictum there was no appeal nor subterfuge: to question his infallibility was a crime beyond the pale of mercy; to dissent from his doctrines was to incur the extremity of punishment in this world, and, according to his infallible canonists, an eternity of torment hereafter. And his was not the age of martyrs. He had two favourite principles, or dogmata of belief, which he maintained with all the unrelenting intolerance of a theologian of the sixteenth century, and with all the jealousy of a tyrant in every age; and, we should add, with all the despotic inconsistency of his character: — these were, his ecclesiastical supremacy, and the catholic doctrine of the "real presence," as explained by himself in his controversy with Luther. By the former he attached to his person the great promoters of the "new learning," of which Cranmer and Latimer

were the heads; by the latter he conciliated the adherents of the ancient worship, of which Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, one of the craftiest and ablest men of his time, was the acknowledged chief. The court and nation were pretty equally divided between these two great antagonist parties; not that their wayward and imperious master allowed any open manifestation of their differences, which might imply a freedom of opinion, and thence an undue infringement on the royal authority. He himself vibrated between them; and by alternately exciting their hopes and fears, insured to himself the most servile submission of both; for, as we before observed, this was not an age of martyrs or high-minded patriots.

The services, however, and the moderation and amiable temper of Cranmer obtained for him the largest share of the king's friendship; unhappily for himself, as it compelled him to be a chief instrument in the persecutions of that reign. These persecutions were conducted with a stern, and, if we might say of so serious a subject, with a ludicrous impartiality. To assert the papal supremacy was treason; to deny the papal doctrine of the eucharist was heresy: the one was punished by hanging; the other with the faggot. Thus papists and protestants were equally obnoxious to the law, should their zeal lead them to an open assertion of all their respective tenets. Henry, to use his own language, could thus "snouch the stiff mumpsimus of the one (the Romanists), or the busy rumpsimus of the other (the reformers)," at pleasure. And it did please him betimes; though, owing, we have no doubt, to the moderate councils of Cranmer, not to such an extent as might be expected from his despotic and sanguinary temper. Two days after the execution of Cromwell, who first suggested to his master the policy of renouncing the papal supremacy, and who was but the too faithful minister of his will, three catholics, coupled with three protestants, were dragged on the same hurdle from the Tower to Smithfield, and there executed; the former

being hanged and quartered as traitors, for denying the king's ecclesiastical pre-eminence; the latter being consumed by fire, as heretics, for questioning the royal doctrine of the eucharist.

But of all the persecutions for heresy of this reign, none excited greater interest than that of Lambert, a schoolmaster in priest's orders, for heresy,—that is, for denying the catholic doctrine of the real presence. Lambert had been imprisoned for the same offence by Cranmer's predecessor in the see of Canterbury, but had escaped punishment by that prelate's timely death. Nothing intimidated, he persisted, after his release, in the open avowal of his opinions, till having heard a sermon on the subject from Dr. Taylor, afterwards bishop of London, he presented that dignitary with an elaborately written protest, under eight heads or reasons, against the Romanist doctrine of transubstantiation. Taylor handed the paper to Dr. Barnes, who maintained the Lutheran consubstantiation theory of the eucharist; but as this differed again from the Wycliffism of Lambert, the latter was cited by Barnes to answer for his heresy before the archbishop. Cranmer, on the accused being brought before him, endeavoured to reason or to intimidate him into a recantation; but Lambert, instead of yielding, appealed from the metropolitan to the king, as head of the church. Henry eagerly embraced so favourable an opportunity for displaying his theological learning, and for asserting his ecclesiastical supremacy. A day was publicly fixed for the unusual contest; and at the appointed hour, the king appeared on his throne, with all his judges, ministers, bishops, and officers of state, to enter the lists with the schoolmaster. The proceedings are told with dramatic effect by Mr. Hume. For five hours the unfortunate Lambert had to contend with the harangues of Henry, Cranmer, Gardiner, and five other leaders of both the old and the new learning. At the end of this time he was asked by the exulting monarch whether he was "satisfied? Wilt thou live or die?" The exhausted and intimidated culprit had no

reply, but that he threw himself on the royal mercy. "Thou must die then!—thou must die! for I will not be the patron of heretics," was the humane answer. Lambert met his fate with firmness; and not the least remarkable circumstance of his story is, that Taylor, Barnes, and Cranmer, the chief instruments in bringing him to the stake, were all three burned a few years afterwards for the very same doctrine, for which they were, moreover, *then* strongly, and perhaps not unjustly, suspected of having a predilection.

In fairness to the men of this age of persecution, it should be borne in mind that intolerance was then, and for more than a century after, the common *law* of Christendom. Toleration was a term scarcely heard of in theory, and wholly unknown in practice. The magistrate of the sixteenth century doubted as little the justice of consigning a heretic to the flames, as the magistrate of our own more enlightened times of sentencing the impugner of established opinions to gaol or transportation, or the utterer of a forged note to the gallows. The pretext—the prevention of crime by terror of its consequences, and the preservation of the integrity of the body corporate, by (to use the favourite metaphor of the times) "the amputation of the diseased member—" was the same in both cases, excepting indeed that the zeal of the former was incited by an additional motive derived from his religion. The conduct of men is mainly determined by the circumstances in which they are placed; among which circumstances, the opinion of contemporaries is, perhaps, the most influential. Public opinion was not outraged by the dreadful punishments inflicted on those from whom the odious charge of heresy repelled the current of public sympathy. Uniformity of theological doctrines was a phrase then synonymous with the very existence of religion itself; and those doctrines and that uniformity it was considered to be the solemn duty of the government to maintain with unrelenting vigilance. Where any relaxation of this stern discipline occurred, it was owing to temperament and animal feel-

ing, rather than to a judicious estimate of the value of religious liberty. At all times and in every class of society are to be found individuals so constitutionally humane, so nervously apprehensive of pain in themselves, so tremblingly sympathetic with the appearance of suffering in others, that not even religious fanaticism can make them unrelentingly cruel. Whenever power is vested in the hands of such persons, a negative toleration, that is, a diminution of, or a refraining from, persecution will prevail; for the actions of individuals, it will be almost invariably found, receive their tone and colouring much more from the general temper or feelings of the heart, than from the decisions of the understanding. Philip Melancthon was a man of this class, and Reginald Pole and Tonstal, and so probably were sir Thomas More and Cranmer: not so Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the other leading reformers on the one hand, nor the Gardiners or Bonners on the other. One fact should be received in palliation of all: the great truth, so pregnant with charity towards our fellow-men, *that belief is independent on the will*, was not in those times dreamt of, and even at present is not so constantly borne in mind as the interests of humanity would dictate. Mistaking the expression of belief for the act itself, the members of each sect or party endeavoured to force the reception of what their own sincerity, by a very natural illusion, convinced them nothing but malignant obstinacy could prevent from being at once eagerly adopted; and thus intolerance was masked, even to its zealots, under the title of checking and punishing wilful error, and of advancing the cause of truth. Before, therefore, we condemn the actors in those dramas of persecution which stain the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, let us consider whether there may not possibly be some of our own laws and usages of so intolerant and sanguinary a character as to require hereafter the lenient interpretation of a more enlightened and thence more humane posterity. While we reprobate the barbarous and unchristian practices of our fathers, it might be as well for us to examine

whether there is any leaven of them still lurking among ourselves. Let us, in a word, take care, while we are indignantly pointing out the beams which blinded the vision of those who have preceded us in the career of human improvement, that some motes of prejudice and uncharitableness may not obstruct our own. The fires of Smithfield are certainly extinguished for ever; but is the spirit of intolerance that kindled them altogether allayed?

The abolition of the papal supremacy necessarily placed the tenure of the hierarchy on a new footing. As yet no prelate had been consecrated without the pope's bull, which bound him to recognise the see of Rome as the canonical head of the church. But this recognition had been lately declared treason; and there was no precedent for the dependency of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction on the will of the civil magistrate. Henry was much puzzled as to the course he should follow in this entirely new order of things. The arbitrariness of his temper led him to push his newly-assumed prerogative to its utmost limits; but in doing so he would be acting in the very teeth of those principles which he had vehemently maintained in his controversy with Luther. From this embarrassment he was relieved by the address and boldness of his vicar-general Cromwell, and by the pliant example of Cranmer. The body of the clergy maintained that the church had inherited from her divine founder a power underived from, and uncontrollable by, the civil authority, to preach and administer the sacraments, and enforce her own discipline by her own weapons and influence. Cranmer, on the other hand, contended, somewhat strangely, when we recollect that he was then Archbishop of Canterbury, that the king alone, having the need of spiritual as well as civil officers, had the right to appoint them. In the time of the apostles, he added, the people appointed, "because they had no Christian king;" but occasionally accepted such as might be recommended by the apostles "of their own voluntary will, and not for any

superiority that the apostles had over them:" in the appointment of bishops and priests, as in that of civil officers, some ceremonies are to be used, "not of necessity, but for good order and seemly fashion:" nevertheless, "he who is appointed bishop or priest needeth no consecration by the scripture, for election or appointment thereto is sufficient."—"This," he says, with his usual caution, "is mine opinion and sentence at *this present*; which, nevertheless, I do not temerariously define, but refer the judgment thereof to your majesty."

But Cromwell, in whom as vicar-general the king's ecclesiastical jurisdiction was vested, was not content with the silent or rather implied submission of the clergy which the archbishop's influence had induced. At the suggestion of two of his creatures, he adopted an expedient, by which the obedience of the church dignitaries would be pushed to the quick. In the plenitude of his authority, as the king's ecclesiastical minister, he suspended the power of all the prelates and ordinaries in the realm, on the ground of a general visitation about to be made by the "supreme head of the church." Those bishops and priests who had claimed an authority by divine right would thus be compelled to produce their proofs; or, if they did not resign their offices, to acknowledge the crown to be the sole origin of spiritual jurisdiction, by petitioning it for the restoration of their usual authority. As might be expected from his Erastian tenets, Cranmer led the way, and submitted with becoming humility. This example was followed by the clergy, to whom he had addressed, as metropolitan, a circular letter on the subject; and, after a month's suspension, each bishop received a separate commission from the king "to do whatever belonged to the office of bishop" during the royal pleasure. The reason assigned for granting the indulgence added to its degradation. It was stated in the commission restoring the episcopal power, not that the government of bishops was necessary for the church, but that the king's vicar-general,

on account of the multiplicity of business with which he was loaded, could not properly attend to every thing in person (*in sua persona expediendum non sufficiet**), and therefore should be provided with assistance, to guard against the inconveniences of delay and interruption."

But Cranmer well knew that the mere assuming of the ecclesiastical supremacy by the crown would little advantage the cause of pure religion so long as those strong holds of the Romish superstition, the monasteries and priories, continued in existence. He accordingly with zeal seconded the counsels of Cromwell for their suppression. The proposal was greedily snatched at by Henry, to whom it opened the prospect of inexhaustible wealth, as well as an ample field for the exercise of power. His courtiers, ministers, and the lords of his council eagerly joined in the chase; for the spoils of the clergy promised a rich harvest to their rapacity, having been held out as the probable reward of their zeal by the artful policy of the vicar-general. Spoliation and plunder thus became the order of the day: the monasteries were suppressed; their corruptions and crimes exposed to public odium; and their funds and lands applied to transforming the hungry minions that spanieled a tyrant's heels into the founders of still flourishing, wealthy, and noble families. But such an application, though in the end, perhaps, one of the most prudent that could have been adopted, was very different from that contemplated by Cranmer. That prelate saw with pain and dismay Henry contenting

* The commission may be seen in Burnet's records to the first volume of his History of the Reformation, under the title, "Licentia Regia concessa Domino episcopo ad exercendam jurisdictionem episcopalem." The passage referred to in the text runs thus: — "Quia tamen ipse Thomas Cromwell nostris et hujus regni Angliæ tot et tam arduis negotiis adeo præpeditus existit, quod ad omnem jurisdictionem nobis, uti Supreme Capite hujusmodi competentem, ubique; locorum infra hoc regnum nostrum præfatum, in his quæ moram commode non patiuntur, aut sine nostrorum subditorum injuria differri non possunt, in sua persona expediendum, non sufficiet. Nos tuis in hac parte supplicationibus humilibus inclinati, et nostrorum subditorum commodis consulere cupientes. Tibi vice nostras," &c.

The bishop erroneously insinuates that Bonner only received this humiliatingly couched licence: — it was the general form.

himself with the slaughter of the carcass, which he left as booty to his followers to fatten upon. He knew that those spoliators were perfectly indifferent to every thing but their own aggrandisement; and that for them the principles of the reformation would have no charms, unless their profession were accompanied by an increase of wealth and worldly distinction. Never yet did the world witness a crew more despicably rapacious than the courtiers of Henry VIII. It was, therefore, with deep regret that Cranmer beheld the alienation of the church property in a manner so different from that which he had recommended, and which Henry had promised to act upon. He proposed that on the new endowments a certain number of cathedrals should be erected, and that in every cathedral there should be provision made for readers of divinity, Greek, and Hebrew; and for "a great number of students to be both exercised in the daily worship of God, and trained up in study and devotion, whom the bishop might transplant out of this nursery into all parts of his diocess." We cannot but lament with the archbishop, that his excellent design had been abandoned for such an unworthy use as gorging the reptiles of a palace; though we are well aware of the benefits which have emerged from a beginning of so little promise.

The measure to the effecting of which the influence of the archbishop was next directed was one of still greater importance to our religion. To the immortal honour of Cranmer be it stated that he was the first to place the Bible in the hands of the laity of England; an act which will atone for a thousand instances of his pusillanimity, and which will ever recommend his name to our gratitude. Henry had promised on the suppression of Tyndal's version of the Old and New Testament in 1530, that he would provide a new translation by the "joint labour of great, learned, and catholic persons." Cranmer, during his residence in Germany, had witnessed the extraordinary success which the reformers derived from the diffusion of the

sacred volume, and had resolved upon its introduction into his native country. Scarcely was he installed, therefore, in the see of Canterbury in 1533, than he reminded the king of his promise; and by his repeated importunity in person, and by inducing the convocation to petition and Cromwell to support the prayer, he at length obtained the royal injunction to have the Bible (Mathew's edition) placed in all parish churches, with the liberty to every man to read it at pleasure, "provided he did not disturb the preacher in his sermon, nor the officiating clergyman during service." In two years after (in 1539) the indulgence was extended from the church to private houses under some restrictions: care being at the same time taken, with the characteristic jealousy of the Tudors, to inform the people that the liberty which they enjoyed was not a right to which they possessed any claim, but a favour granted "of the royal liberality and goodness."

Thus was the way cleared for the reformation in England. By abolishing the papal supremacy and making the crown the source of all ecclesiastical authority, the clergy were stripped of the power of resisting the further innovations of the sovereign, and made wholly dependent on his will. By the suppression of the monasteries they were, moreover, deprived of the means of appealing to the prejudices of the people, unless in the dangerous character of rebels. By distributing the church possessions among his courtiers and gentry, Henry bound them to the new order of things by the ties of property, hope, fear, and gratitude; and by disseminating the Bible among the middle classes, he prepared them for the reception of gospel truth, by enabling them, of themselves, to distinguish between it and papal error. The favour of the working classes and lower orders was not yet directly appealed to.

While these important proceedings were in progress, two events occurred productive of much uneasiness to Cranmer, — the fall and execution of Cromwell, on a

charge of treason, and the beheading of Queen Catherine Howard for incontinency. With the vicar-general Cranmer had been in habits of the closest confidence and friendship, and had, as we have seen, used his influence in aid of the protestant doctrines. Cromwell was not at heart a friend of the reformation; but, being hated and despised by the adherents to the old worship, he was thrown, by a spirit of revenge, among the leaders of the new learning. During his official career, Cranmer's councils were, by his support, made paramount in the cabinet, and the religious tenets of the court approximated more and more to those of the Lutheran reformers. But after this fall, as the archbishop had foreseen, the opinions of Henry, acted upon by Gardiner and the other Romanist ministers, retrograded to the doctrines of the treatise by which he had won the title of "Defender of the Faith." It was, therefore, with dismay that Cranmer heard of his friend's arrest and impeachment; for he had a true presentiment of its consequences to religion, which augmented the anguish of personal sorrow. He wrote to the king on the subject, and dwelt much on the fallen minister's zeal and diligence in his service, "and in discovering all plots as soon as they were made: that he had always loved the king above all things, and served him with great fidelity and success: that he thought no king of England ever had such a servant: upon that account he had loved him, as one that loved the king above all others. But," he adds, with his usual timidity and caution, "if he was a traitor, he was glad it was discovered. But he prayed God earnestly to send the king such a counsellor in his stead, who could and would serve him as he had done." * Knowing the danger as well as inutility of attempting to arrest the hand of Henry once raised in vengeance, he prudently avoided all allusion to the particular charge on which Cromwell

* "This letter," says Burnet, "shows both the firmness of Cranmer's friendship, and that he had a great soul, not turned by the change of men's fortunes to like or dislike them as they stood or declined from their greatness."—The letter, the reader will probably think, far less shows Cranmer's firmness or greatness of soul than the bishop's remarks evince the wish to invest him with them.

had been arrested, and confined himself to a recapitulation of his former services. Having thus indulged his better feelings, he went along with the stream, and voted for the second and the third reading of the bill of attainder without trial, of which atrocious instrument of despotism, by a kind of retributive justice, Cromwell was the first victim, as he had been the first inventor. Though there was much base ingratitude and cruelty on the part of his master in the fate of Cromwell, it was with justice but little lamented by the nation at large; for even his ignominious death could not allay the recollection that he had been at all times the artful counsellor and willing instrument of that master's tyranny against others.

The king was on one of his progresses, accompanied by his young queen, Catherine Howard, when one Lascelles waited on Cranmer, and acquainted him with facts, on the authority of his sister, a servant in the Norfolk family, which tainted the honour of the royal bed. The information could only excite regret and terror. It is painful to a humane mind to be the instrument of another's disgrace or misery; and yet the archbishop felt that his loyalty as well as his safety would be compromised, and might be endangered, by his keeping the secret to his own bosom. He communicated the matter to the chancellor and others of the council; and they agreed with him, that though it might be equally dangerous to conceal as to discover it to the king, the latter course would, under all circumstances, be the most prudent. As the subject was one of great delicacy, Cranmer broke it to the unsuspecting husband in a long letter, in which the manner in which the information was obtained is stated with anxious minuteness, lest it should be inferred that he was a seeker of scandal or a spy upon the proceedings of the palace. An enquiry was the result of this painful intelligence: incontinency before marriage was proved against the Lady Catherine, and criminality after inferred. The opportunity of shedding blood was too tempting and feasible to be resisted:

on the 13th February, 1542, she was beheaded on Tower-hill, asserting her conjugal fidelity, while she confessed her maiden delinquencies.

It would be needless to enquire what share Cranmer had in framing and sanctioning the "Institution" and the "Erudition" of "a Christian Man," or whether the "bloody" law of the six articles was wholly owing to the intrigues of Gardiner and the Romanist party. During Henry's reign, the royal standard of orthodoxy would have been received by the clergy of the new learning, even though it were still more popish in its doctrine; and by the clergy of the old learning, even though it had issued from the protestant league of Smalcald. He was infallible in his own estimation, and, what was more, possessed the will and the power to prove himself so in that of others. The "Institution," and the "Erudition," which was known by the name of the king's book, are chiefly remarkable for the ultra-catholicism of their theology, and for the earnestness with which they inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience.* They were the standard of orthodoxy till the accession of Edward VI., when the reformation party became possessed of the management of affairs, and all persons were compelled to subscribe to them.

The statute of the six articles was, however, still more trying to the feeling and conscience of the friends of pure religion, particularly to Cranmer, who employed all his address, and a degree of boldness that was unusual to him, to have it softened down, if not defeated. One of those articles, indeed, touched him to the quick: it declared the marriages of priests to be invalid, and compelled such persons in orders as might have been living with their wives to repudiate them, making subsequent cohabitation felony. The reader is aware, that during

* A sermon of Cranmer is quoted by Strype, in which it is inculcated, that "though the magistrates be evil and very tyrants against the commonwealth, and enemies to Christ's religion, yet ye subjects must obey in all worldly things as the Christians do under the truth, and ought so to do, as long as he commandeth them not to do against God." The same doctrine was preached by the Romanist party, as may be seen in Gardiner's De Vera Obedientia.

his residence in Germany, Cranmer had married a kinswoman of Osiander, a Lutheran divine. He never publicly avowed his marriage, as the canon which imposed celibacy on the priesthood had not been abrogated, and the king was well known to be averse from his clergy entering into a state of wedlock. His wife, however, lived with him in private, and bore him several children. His first opposition to the atrocious statute, which he knew would bear on him with such terrible severity, was made in the committee of spiritual peers, whose labours terminated in the framing of the six articles. That committee he divided for eleven days on every article, till Henry grew so impatient, that he came down in person, and awed the prelates (excepting the bishop of Salisbury, who "continueth a lewd fool,") by his "goodlie learning" into unanimity. As the danger came nearer, Cranmer's efforts and ingenuity to avert it were doubled; and at last he ventured to submit his reasons in writing to the "superior judgment of the king's grace," against the obnoxious articles, particularly that which insisted on the celibacy of the clergy. On this sore point he suggested the expediency of a royal declaration, that would be equivalent to a suspension of that part of the statute, till the lawfulness of the marriage of priests should be debated in the universities, on the hazardous condition, that, if judgment were given against his opinion, its advocates should suffer death; if in its favour, that the canonical prohibition, and the article founded on it, should be no longer enforced, and that the matter should be left in future to every man's own conscience.* Henry bore patiently with this un-

* The delivery of the MS. treatise, containing the archbishop's objections to the six articles, was accompanied by a ludicrous accident, illustrative of the customs of the times. The bearer of it, Cranmer's secretary, "must needs go to the Southwark side of the river, in a wherry, to look on a *bear-baiting* that was near the river, *where the king was in person.* They that were in the boat leaped out, and left the poor secretary alone there. But the bear got into the boat, with the dogs about her, and sunk it." The secretary and the treatise were, however saved from drowning.

Our modern notions are startled by the fact of the king's joining a rabble rout at a bear-bait: but even the court ladies took part in those cruel "amusements." Bear-baiting was the Virgin Queen's favourite pastime: with it she treated her most distinguished visiters; and it was an important

usual contradiction to his will, but remained inexorable. Cranmer next induced Melancthon to write the king a long letter, for the purpose of subduing his obstinacy; but also without avail. Henry was rooted to his purpose; and the archbishop saw with dismay, that his marriage was rendered void in law, and that death might be the penalty of his continuing to harbour his wife and children. Having despatched them in haste to their friends in Germany, and written a dutiful apology to the king for his presumption in for a moment differing in opinion from him, Cranmer artfully revived a design of a conference between the English and continental divines, that had been agitated for the last few years in the council. After what had passed, to persist in calling in question any of the articles might have cost him his head; but he wisely conceived that foreigners might with safety impugn them under the appearance of advocating their own doctrines; and that the king might thus be induced to relax from his obstinacy. The conference was accordingly held; but Henry was not diverted a tittle from his opinions; and till his death Cranmer was obliged to keep his wife and children on the Continent, without daring to avow the validity of his marriage.

The slippery footing on which the law of celibacy placed Cranmer with respect to his further efforts for the advancement of the reformation, made him confine himself very much to the immediate business of his see during the remainder of this reign. The court, as usual, was divided by the overt intrigues of the two great religious parties who struggled for the king's favour, and who looked up to Gardiner, and the Duke of Norfolk, and the archbishop and the Seymours, as their leaders. As the question at issue was now mixed up

ingredient in the fare which she received in return, on her progresses. There were not less than twelve bears killed for her amusement at Kenilworth, at her now immortal visit there. When Shakspeare became a proprietor of the Globe theatre in Southwark, the performances were forbidden on those days in which the "game of bear-baiting, and like pastimes, which are maintained for her majesty's pleasure," was practised.

with polemics, it need scarcely be added, that each antagonist regarded the other with intense and implacable hatred. Many attempts were made to deprive Cranmer of the royal countenance; but Henry had too much confidence in his loyalty, and too grateful a recollection of his many delicate services, to be affected either by the insinuations or complaints of those whom he knew to be the archbishop's personal enemies. The prebendaries of Canterbury brought a charge against him, but were themselves arraigned, some imprisoned, and all obliged to beg the accused prelate's pardon. The member for Bedfordshire had the boldness, in the house of commons, to accuse Cranmer of heresy; but the king sent the "varlet" a peremptory message, that if he did not immediately acknowledge his error, he should be made an example to his fellows. On another occasion, Henry had consented to the committal of the archbishop; but, on reflection, changed his mind, and sent him a ring as a testimony of his unaltered friendship. The readers of Shakspeare are aware of the subsequent incidents: — Cranmer was bidden to the council, at the door of which "the primate of all England was kept waiting an hour among the footmen and servants," according to the testimony of an eye-witness: the king unexpectedly appeared among them: Cranmer produced the ring, and there followed "a wonderful confusion." The king commanded them to be reconciled to the archbishop, whom "he protested by the faith he owed to God, — laying his hand on his breast, — that if a prince could be obliged by his subjects, he was by the primate; and that he took him to be the most faithful subject he had, and a person to whom he was most beholden." With this striking proof of the sovereign's affection for the archbishop, the overt malice of his enemies ceased till the reign of Mary.

Cranmer attended his royal patron in his last moments. Being asked if he wished to confer with any clergyman, now that he was on the approach of death, Henry answered, "Only with Cranmer, and not with him as yet. I will first repose myself a little (he could

not bear the thought of dying), and as I find myself I will determine." When the archbishop arrived, he found him speechless, but not altogether insensible. He asked him to give him some intimation of his reliance on the merits of his Redeemer. The king grasped his hand strongly, bowed his head, and expired.* By his will Cranmer was appointed one of the council of regency during the minority of the young Edward.

The usual consequences of a despotic reign manifested themselves immediately on the death of Henry. So long as he lived, the firm pressure of his iron hand had, as we have seen, enforced a level monotony of obedience. That removed, a recoil took place in the public mind that was felt at once in our civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Scarcely had his remains been consigned to the tomb, when his more sanguinary laws were abrogated, his anomalous treasons and felonies effaced from the statute book, and his proclamations stripped of their legislative validity. The king's book, "The Erudition of a Christian Man," ceased to be the standard of religious orthodoxy; for the young prince and his two uncles, and Cranmer, his most influential counsellors, were strongly imbued with the spirit of Protestantism, and had determined on separating still further the Church of England from the Catholic worship. But these beneficial changes were but the bright morning of a cloudy day: the public mind was in a state of high excitement, and restless ambition renewed its outrages against law and reason. An oligarchy, with its factious concomitants, succeeded to a despotism: one successful monopolist of the power which Henry, by his will, had equally devolved upon a council of regency, of not less than sixteen persons, followed another to the scaffold; to-day the protector signed the death-warrant of his own brother,

* It has been truly observed by Clarendon, that, except in the matter of the papal supremacy, Henry lived and died a sturdy catholic. Besides receiving the sacrament according to the rites and interpretation of the Roman Catholic church, he willed a sum of money for masses for his soul, perhaps thinking it prudent to be on the safe side on the purgatory doctrine.

to-morrow he shares that brother's fate; a no distant day sees Dudley, the successful usurper of the young monarch's prerogatives, atoning with his life for his lawless presumption. All this while, however, it is consoling to observe that the doctrines of the reformation were, under the vigilant care of Cranmer, advancing with a certain, because steady and moderate, progress; and, by the close of the short reign of Edward the Sixth, had become so deeply rooted in the affections of the more enlightened, wealthy, and thence influential classes, that they have to this day continued the inalienable patrimony of the English people. A brief exposition of the principles by which the archbishop and his associates were guided, in effecting this great religious revolution, will, besides being more suitable to our design than a mere chronological narrative of each proceeding in which Cranmer was engaged in the interval between the death of Henry and the accession of Mary, we should hope, impress the reader with a due conviction of their wisdom and moderation. Cranmer's first step was to petition the new king for a licence to continue in the exercise of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, on the ground that, as his archiepiscopal authority was derived solely from the crown, it necessarily expired with the death of the granting monarch. The example of the metropolitan was, as a matter of course, followed by the other prelates; and their dependence on, and their obedience to, the will of the executive by this means revived and strengthened.

Having thus precluded the evil consequences of refractory colleagues, the archbishop next established a royal visitation, chiefly for the purpose of enforcing his Book of Homilies, just then composed, and Erasmus's paraphrase of the New Testament, to be read after mass in every church on Sundays and holidays. The object was to familiarise the people with the language and injunctions of the Gospel delivered in the vernacular tongue, and by that means to make the introduction of more striking changes in the ancient practices and worship, which he was then maturing in his own bosom, less

abrupt and repugnant to established prejudices. "The greatest part of the ignorant commons" (we quote Burnet, vol. ii. p. 35.) "seemed to consider their priests as a sort of people who had such a secret trick of saving their souls as mountebanks pretend in the cure of diseases; and that there was nothing to be done but to leave themselves in their hands, and the business could not miscarry. This was the chief basis and support of all that superstition which was so prevalent in the nation. The other extreme was of some corrupt gospeller, who thought if they magnified Christ much, and depended on his merits and intercession, they could not perish, which way soever they led their lives. In the Homilies, therefore, especial care was taken to rectify both these errors." Between these two extremes Cranmer steered with great address and moderation; on the one hand, dwelling on the boundless merits of Christ's sufferings; on the other, insisting that, to partake of them, repentance and purity of heart were indispensably necessary. The catholic ceremonies were left untouched, and only the more gross superstitions, such as driving out the devil by sprinkling holy water and lighting consecrated candles, animadverted upon and forbidden. The use of images was not yet discouraged, their worship alone being prohibited*, as contrary to the mandates of Scripture.

Having thus cautiously felt his way, the primate proceeded to lop off, by little and little, the superstitious excrescences that had disfigured for so many ages the purity and simplicity of the Christian worship, and to engraft gradually in their stead those doctrines and ceremonies which are still the boast of the church of England. Orders were issued to all the bishops to abolish, in their respective dioceses, the custom of bearing candles on Candlemas-day, of receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday, and of carrying palms on Palm Sunday; and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was commanded to be thenceforth administered in both kinds,

* "Among Cranmer's papers I have seen several arguments for a moderate use of images." *Burnet*, ii. p. 13.

and in the English language. The mass * was, at the same time, celebrated as usual in Latin; and care was taken to guard against offensive comments on the catholic belief of the real presence in the eucharist.

A great progress was thus unobtrusively and unresistingly made in favour of the new doctrines, and Cranmer so far emboldened to proceed with his other projected innovations. Aware of the deep root which the ancient worship had taken in the minds of the large majority of the people, clergy as well as laity, and of the firm hold which the catholic discipline had in the two universities, he encouraged by all means in his power the influx of foreign divines and professors into England. They were assured of a hospitable asylum in his own palace till otherwise provided for; and were only called upon, in return, to aid by their knowledge and eloquence the common cause of the reformation. Among the divines and preachers who, in consequence of this tempting invitation, flocked to the archiepiscopal residence at Lambeth, the most distinguished for their learning, ability, and zeal, were the celebrated John Knox, and Bucer and Peter Martyr, at the time heads of the church and university of Strasburg. Knox was appointed one of the royal chaplains, and was licensed and encouraged to preach every where throughout the kingdom, having had the honesty to refuse a benefice; "because," says Strype, "many things were worthy of reformation in England without the reformation, whereof no minister did or could discharge his conscience before God." Bucer, who was remarkable among theologians for a sort of metaphysical acuteness, — or rather, for a scholastic and disingenuous † subtlety, — was appointed to lecture on divinity in Cambridge; while his friend, Peter Martyr, an honester

* Cranmer celebrated a high mass for the repose of the soul of Francis I., who died a few months after Henry.

† Bucer thought that, for avoiding contention, and for maintaining peace and quietness in the church, somewhat more *ambiguous words* should be used, that might have a respect to both persuasions concerning the presence. But Martyr was of another judgment, and affected to speak of the Sacrament with all plainness and perspicuity. *Strype*, ii. 120.

and bolder man, was elected to the theological chair of the other university. By these able and learned men, the continental doctrines of the eucharist, free will, and justification were taught to the rising generation of churchmen in England.

A catechism "for the singular Profit and Instruction of Children and Young People," was Cranmer's next measure. In this "easy, but most useful work,*" the archbishop strongly leans to the ancient doctrines; he teaches the catholic theory of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist; "exhorts much to confessions, and the people's dealing with their pastors about their consciences;" and, contrary to his precepts in the former reign, maintains the divine institution of priests and bishops. A much more important work soon followed — the Book of Common Prayer, compiled chiefly from the Romish ritual, which is in the main similar to that in use at the present hour, and which almost immediately received the sanction of Edward and his parliament. The church of England having now by law its own liturgy, rites, and ceremonies, and its separation from the papal communion being thence legislatively consummated, it only remained for Cranmer to win for that liturgy the sympathy and support of public opinion. In his conduct in this delicate affair, as we have premised, we shall find much reason to admire his discretion, excellent common sense, and knowledge of the springs of human action.

It may be stated as a general rule, that it is essential to the permanent success of religious, not less than of political, revolutions, that they be effected with rapidity; that is, that the promulgation of the new doctrines be so much in accord with the public aspirations of the time being,— however undefined, vague, or indeterminate these may appear,— that they may seem to be but their echo. Wycliffism was stifled in its birth by the mephitic exhalations which for centuries had polluted the

* Burnet, who says the catechism was first made in Latin by another, but revived in translation by Cranmer.

religious atmosphere of England; in other words, it was not responded to by public sympathy, it was too much in the van of the general intelligence, it breathed no congenial atmosphere. On the other hand, it cannot fail to strike the philosophic observer, that the very fact of theological innovations spreading rapidly among a rude people, is a positive proof that reason had little or no share in their reception. The progress of truths, which now appear to be a part of our very being, was for a time slow and gradual. They were first discussed and adopted by a few as valuable accessions to their knowledge. The circle of diffusion becomes in time wider and wider: they are now received by many because they are the opinions of those whom they look up to; by others, from imitation; by some, because long familiarity makes their evidence appear intuitive. Their reception thus in time grows universal, and seems, like the acquired perceptions of vision, to be a primary law of our nature. But this slowness and gradualness is, it is evident, incompatible with the essential rapidity of a great religious revolution, like that which gives such celebrity to the reigns of Henry and his immediate successors. Generations would perish without participating in the benefits of the reformation, if they were not at once made glaringly manifest to the dullest apprehensions of the people, instead of relying on the intrinsic truth of its principles and their consequent general, but too tardy, diffusion. This fact could not escape the sagacity of the friends of the new doctrines. The question then for them was—to facilitate the progress of those doctrines, by presenting them as tangibly as possible to the common sense of the nation; while the errors and absurdities of the old worship were no less forcibly exposed to what may be designated the *sensuous* understanding of the vulgar. To men so illiterate as our fathers at this time, it would be a vain waste of breath to endeavour to win them to the protestant tenets by controversial sermons on their Gospel purity, or by tracts proving with learned logic the antiscriptural basis

of the faith in which they had been bred up. They should be first made to *see* and *feel* the truth of the one, and *see* and *feel* the corruptions of the other. The Horatian remark, that —

> " Segnius irritant animos demissa per *aures;*
> Quam quæ sunt *oculis* subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
> Ipse sibi tradit spectator."

applies universally; and the success which attended the labours of Cranmer and his associates proves their having acted upon it. The principle thus asserted by the poet pervades all their measures, and indeed almost all the proceedings of the promoters of the English reformation.

In the former reign, as we have all read, great exertions were successfully made in exposing to the senses of the multitude the pretended miracles and pious impostures of the clergy. The miraculous crucifix, the " Rood of Grace," as it was called, which had attracted generations of pilgrims to Boxley in Kent, and which had proved one of the most lucrative of the monkish inventions, was taken to pieces at St. Paul's cross, and the several springs and wheels by which the head, mouth, and eyes of the image were made to move miraculously, according to the payment of the votaries, exposed to the public gaze, touch, and ridicule. " There was a huge image of our Lady at Worcester that was had in great reverence," it having performed an orthodox number of marvellous cures of both soul and body. It was stripped before the people, and found to be the statue of a bishop, " the which caused huge laughter to the beholders thereon." Another famous imposture was discovered at Hales, in Gloucestershire; a phial containing the blood of Christ, taken from his body at Jerusalem. Its miraculous nature was shown by its becoming invisible to any one in a state of mortal sin, and continuing so till the criminal had expiated his offences by masses and offerings. The sacred blood was discovered to have been the blood of a duck, which was weekly killed in private for the purpose by two monks in the secret of the cheat; and the visibility of

the fluid was found to depend on turning the phial, one side of which was transparent, the other opaque. When rich pilgrims arrived, they were sure to be shown the dark side; and, "having drained them of all that they brought with them, then they consoled them by turning the clear side outward, who upon that went home very well satisfied with their journey, and the expense they had been at."*

By these exposures to the eye and touch of the multitude, the feeling of fraud and corruption in their religious institutions was insensibly reduced, and the public mind prepared for the reception of newer and purer doctrines. To diminish still more the reverence of the people for the ancient worship, plays and farces were frequently performed in the churches, of which the invariable subject was the vices of the clergy, and the absurdities of the established superstitions. The effect of this great engine of ridicule would appear incredible to a modern frequenter of the drama. A semi-malicious relish of all jests at the expense of the great and the reverend is a part of our national character, and was, in this case, the more freely encouraged by the friends of the reformation, because the less ceremonial character of the protestant service exempted it from the caricatures by which the pageants and mummeries of the catholic worship were held up to public laughter. Thus we see the sensuous character of the religion of the church of Rome, by which she bound to herself, during centuries of intellectual darkness, the allegiance of the Christian world, tended ultimately to her degradation and downfall.

Bearing steadily in mind the principle which we have endeavoured to explain, Cranmer proceeded in his great undertaking. He knew that it was essential to the reasonable and unmysterious character of the new religion that its service should be expressed in the mother-tongue of its adherents; and yet he knew — such is the force of superstitious association — that the

* Burnet, ii. 1. 313.

very fact of the mass being celebrated in an unknown dialect impressed the vulgar with a sense of mysterious awe, which, by a natural illusion, was extended to the officiating priesthood. His conduct in this difficulty displayed his good sense and moderation. He framed his new English liturgy out of materials furnished by the Roman ritual. Its elevated piety and simplicity recommended it to the friends of pure religion; while its being but a translation, in the mother-tongue, of the daily service of their altar, could not fail to attract to it the enlightened members of the catholic communion. In either case, the senses were made ministrant to his purpose.

A broad mark of *sensible* distinction being thus drawn between the new and old worship, without inducing the alarm of a radical difference, Cranmer next enlisted the pride of the multitude on his side, by proclaiming their private judgment to be the ultimate appeal in all scriptural controversy. Not that he ever intended to consult their decisions, for he was too well aware of their incompetency to come to any; but he knew that the permission to every man to freely exercise his "private judgment" in the meaning of the Scriptures, could not fail to alienate him from a religion which denied that indulgence, and to make him, on the other hand, a friend to the system of belief which granted it as a matter of right. In point of fact, the reformers were at this time to the full as intolerant as the catholics in their interpretations of the sacred volume; but employed different, though much less consistent, means of ensuring a conformity with their own comments and opinions. All, therefore, who fancied they were exercising their private judgment, when they were probably only marshalling one set of prejudices in array against another, favoured the new doctrines.

The Scriptures being now the inheritance of every man, and the right of exercising the private judgment in their interpretation being promulgated as a religious obligation, the next step for the promoters of the reformation naturally was the sweeping away all those

ceremonies and dogmas of the Roman worship which were not sanctioned by the letter or the spirit of the inspired writings. The Virgin, consequently, was deprived of her divine honours; most of the saints were cashiered or superannuated; and the terra incognita of purgatory expunged from the map of true religion, as unknown to the prophets, and repugnant to the doctrine of justification. The practice of confession was left to the opinion of each "private judgment" on its efficacy, and very soon fell into disuse.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper can present itself to the candid mind but under two interpretations,—either that of the church of Rome, with all its absurdities; or that of the Zuinglian divines, with its apparent contradictions to the letter of the Gospel. Endless attempts, however, were for nearly a century made to hit off a kind of middle term which might embrace the two opposing doctrines; and it was not till an ocean of blood and ink had been spilt that the Zuinglian version became a part of the English liturgy.

Though the reformation was now consummated, its great fosterer's labours were not at an end. The statute imposing celibacy on the clergy was yet unrepealed: his wife and children were still exiles. The marriage of ecclesiastics was highly unpalatable to parliament and the nation; so much so, indeed, that had not Cranmer's private feelings been deeply involved in the issue, it is very doubtful whether the liberty of entering into a state of wedlock would be even now enjoyed by the priesthood. It certainly would not have been granted in the reign of Elizabeth, or in that of her successor; and would not have been thought of in the cabinet of Mary.

In the preamble to the first bill which, at the instigation of the archbishop, was brought into parliament, to repeal so much of the law of the Six Articles as prohibited the marriage of the clergy, the intended indulgence was spoken of as an "ignominious and tolerated evil;" and perpetual continence was recommended, as

becoming the spiritual character of a ministry which could not be too much relieved from worldly embarrassments in the performance of its duties. Cranmer, however, persevered; and, after much opposition, a subsequent bill received the sanction of the legislature, and liberty to marry became the right of protestant churchmen.

It would have been well for Cranmer's reputation had he confined himself exclusively to the duties of his prelacy, and had not lent the weight of his name, as patriarch of the church of England, to the designs of factious ambition. "But even the good men of those days," says a late writer* on them, "were strange beings." Where blood and life are or may be involved in the result, the canon law prohibits clergymen from having any share in the transaction; nevertheless, such was the archbishop's unfortunate facility of compliance with the requests of another,—the brother of the criminal,—that he signed the warrant for the admiral Seymour's execution, and influenced Latimer to justify the deed in a sermon before the boy monarch. Seymour no doubt merited his fate; but the minister of a religion of peace and mercy should not have been, in any way, his executioner.

A measure still more questionable, of which Cranmer was the chief agent, was the harsh treatment of those prelates who adhered to the ancient forms of worship. The reader need hardly be reminded of the imprisonment and deprivations of Bonner, then bishop of London, and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester. The unnecessary (to use the mildest phrase) oppression of those vindictive men only created justifying precedents for retaliating in kind when circumstances afterwards possessed them with the power. Without intimidating them, it generated the will and the motive to persecute in return, and taught the benevolent the melancholy truth, that the difference between the prelates of the old

* Turner's Modern History of England, a valuable depository of curious facts and reasonings.

and the new church was less one of intolerance of spirit, than of verbal faith and outward worship.

But these were but slight blemishes compared with the flagitious persecutions for heresy which stain the reputation of Cranmer. It might have been fairly expected from men who had taken the lead in asserting the liberty of thinking with an unfettered conscience on religion, and who had boldly opposed the right of private judgment to the authority of ages, that they at least would respect that right, and that liberty, when exercised by others. Above all men, a repugnance to the shedding of blood for points of faith should have been manifested by Cranmer; for he had seen the innocent led to the scaffold, and had in the former reign assisted in consigning to the flames the fearless asserter of doctrines which he now himself heartily espoused. But this, as we have before observed, was an age of religious bigotry, and even the benevolent Cranmer partook of its persecuting spirit. In the third year of Edward's reign, in 1549, a commission was appointed of which the archbishop was head, to "search after all anabaptists, heretics, and condemners of the Common Prayer," and to hand them over to the secular power in the event of their failing previously to reclaim them. Many abjured their errors rather than become martyrs, and carried faggots at St. Paul's cross in the usual manner of penitent heretics. "But," says Burnet (Hist. Reformation, vol. ii. p. 146.), "there was another of these extreme obstinates, Joan Bocher, commonly called Joan of Kent. She denied that Christ was truly incarnate of the Virgin, whose flesh being sinful, he could take none of it; but the Word, by the consent of the inward man in the Virgin, took flesh of her: these were her words. They took much pains about her, and had many conferences with her; but she was so extravagantly conceited in her own notions, that she rejected all they said with scorn. Whereupon she was adjudged an obstinate heretic, and so left to the secular power. This sentence being returned to the coun-

cil, the good king was moved to sign a warrant for burning her, but could not be prevailed on to do it; he thought it a piece of cruelty, too like that which they had condemned in papists, to burn any for their consciences. And, in a long discourse he had with sir J. Chick, he seemed much confirmed in that opinion. Cranmer was therefore employed to persuade him to sign the warrant." (What an office for an aged prelate to a child!) "He argued from the law of Moses, by which blasphemers were to be stoned: he told the king he made a great difference between errors in other points of divinity and those which were directed against the apostles' creed; that these were impieties against God, which a prince, as being God's deputy, ought to punish, as the king's deputies were obliged to punish offences against the king's person. These reasons did rather silence than satisfy the young king, who still thought it a hard thing (as in truth it was) to proceed so severely in such cases; so he set his hand to the warrant with tears in his eyes, saying to Cranmer, that if he did wrong, since it was in submission to his authority, he should answer for it to God." This declaration of the young monarch so alarmed the archbishop that he had the woman brought to his house, "to see if he and Ridley could persuade her;" but she only replied with jeers and taunts at their inconsistencies. "It is a goodly matter,' said she to Cranmer, as he was on the point of passing sentence on her, "to consider your ignorance. It was not long ago you burned Anne Arken for a piece of bread, and yet came yourself soon after to believe and profess the same doctrine for which you burned her; and now, forsooth, you will needs burn me for a piece of flesh, and in the end you will come to believe this also, when you have read the Scriptures and understand them." This almost irresistible appeal only irritated the prelate: he delivered sentence against her as an obstinate heretic, and she was burned soon after. A few days later Von Parris, a Dutchman, was also consigned to the flames for Arianism.

Such was the conduct, so monstrously inconsistent, of the great patriarchs of the reformation. Blinded by religious zeal, and the intolerant spirit of the age, they could not see that they were furnishing the adherents to the ancient faith with a rich armoury of weapons of persecution. It did not strike them, that if Joan Bocher and Von Parris were guilty in freely exercising their private judgment in interpreting the Scriptures, all their ecclesiastical innovations, and the reformation itself, must, *à fortiori*, be denounced as the most audacious and deliberate criminality. But, it cannot be too often repeated, these were times of unparalleled changes, great excitement, and intolerance. A mighty concussion had shaken society to its foundation, and the moral and intellectual man had not yet reasserted himself in his native equanimity and clearsightedness. Men should, we again remind the reader, be judged by the standard of their own age alone; as there is no man but in a great degree takes his colouring of conduct from the habits of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. We are the creatures of circumstance and imitation; and imitation, says Bacon, is a globe of precepts. The progress of truth and improvement is imperceptible in short periods: so that the habits of thought and action, the religious belief, the political predilections and aversions, and opinions of men and books of the passing events, differ but a shade here and there from those of the past generations; and that again runs, like the colours of the rainbow, insensibly into the preceding. No one link of the chain of being, therefore, stands out prominently in advance of its neighbouring one in either moral or intellectual improvement; and though individuals may, in the closet, promulgate doctrines that far outstrip the general intelligence, they must wait till that intelligence has grown up to them before these doctrines become principles of action. In the mean while, their conduct in life assimilates itself to that of their fellow men, however theoretically inconsistent with their private speculations.

A great moral lesson should be the inference from these remarks—charity towards the holder of opinions different from our own, and a hesitation to condemn too harshly the actions and usages of other times and circumstances. We teach our children to loathe the very name of "bloody queen Mary;" but we forget, at the same time, to inform them, that that princess possessed virtues which, in circumstances more favourable to their growth than those by which she was surrounded from her cradle, would have made her a theme for our warmest eulogies. We teach them to justly reprobate the name of Bonner, without informing them, that if that dark-minded prelate had lived in our days, his zeal would be confined to an intolerant speech from the bench of bishops, or a declamatory pamphlet, or angry charge against his religious opponents; and that it is not improbable, that, if some of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of our own times had been his contemporaries, their conduct would not have been less intolerant. We have all read with indignation of the burning of Servetus: we have all seen the ashes of the poet Byron refused a resting place in Westminster Abbey. No doubt the honour of religion was the sole source of the latter ungracious act; but did Calvin only indulge a passion for torturing a fellow-creature? Change the time, the place, the circumstances, and would—or rather say, could—the stern reformer of Geneva in the nineteenth century evince his disapprobation of heterodoxy more pointedly? In a word, then, let us judge charitably of our persecuting fathers; and while reprobating and avoiding their faults, let us bless Providence that we have been permitted to live in a country and an age of civil and religious liberty.

The court of the well-taught clever boy who now held the sceptre had been for some time a scene of contentions between the Dudley and Seymour factions. Cranmer was an adherent to the interest of the protector; for to him was he indebted for the aid of the government in erecting the new system of public worship. There was a something, moreover, of congeniality of

disposition in the two men that tinged their official intercourse with the warmth of private friendship. Both were well-intentioned and kind-hearted: Somerset, not less than the archbishop, wanted that firmness and decision of character so necessary in times of danger and trouble to men in high station. It was, therefore, with regret that Cranmer saw his patron led to the scaffold, and his rival, Northumberland, in possession of the young monarch's confidence. "On the 22d of January, 1552," writes Edward in his journal, "the duke of Somerset had his head cut off upon Tower Hill, between eight and nine in the morning." This duke of Somerset, whose execution is thus so coldly and briefly noticed, the reader is aware, was the youthful journalist's favourite uncle.

Edward had inherited a delicate constitution from his mother, and with it that precociousness of talent sometimes considered as indicative of a short career. His illness was now advancing rapidly to its fatal termination. On the 11th of June, 1553, Montague, chief justice of the Common Pleas, with two of the puisne judges, and the attorney and solicitor general, received a summons to attend the council at the palace of Greenwich. On their arrival the dying monarch informed them, that his anxiety for the welfare of his subjects had induced him to change the order of succession laid down by his royal father; that he had seriously weighed the danger the kingdom might be exposed to if his sister Mary, with her popish predilections, should succeed to the throne, and the danger that might follow to the laws and religion of the country if either of the princesses married a stranger to both. The law officers were then ordered to draw up a legal instrument, declaring his cousin, the lady Jane Dudley, daughter of Grey, duke of Suffolk, and wife of a son of Northumberland, the prime originator of the whole proceeding, heir to the crown. After many delays and expostulations on the part of the chief justice and his colleagues, and reprimands and threats from the king and Northumberland, the in-

strument establishing a new order of succession was legally executed. On the 21st of June it was signed by the chancellor, the archbishop, judges, and the leading nobility. Cranmer at first refused the sanction of his name to the deed, and argued zealously against it at the council and in private. "I never liked it," he says, in his letter to queen Mary, "nor any thing grieved me so much as your grace's brother did; and if by any means it had been to have hindered the making of that will, I should have done it." He yielded ultimately to Edward's personal entreaties. "So at length I was required by the king's majesty himself to set my hand to his will, saying, that he trusted that I alone would not be more repugnant to his will than the rest of the council were; which words surely grieved my heart very sore, and so I granted him to subscribe his will, and to follow the same." On the 6th of July the youthful monarch expired.

The nine-days' reign of the young, beautiful, and all-accomplished pupil of Roger Ascham, lady Jane Dudley, followed, with its fatal consequences to its innocent victim and guilty author. For the designing and unprincipled Northumberland there can be no pity; he justly died the death of a traitor; but who that reads the artless narrative of the puppet-queen, but must lament that she should have been the ill-fated tool of her father-in-law's ambition. Cranmer adhered faithfully to her interests to the last hour, though, as we have seen, he had embraced them with reluctance.

From Mary the archbishop could hope but for little mercy: all that was dark and resentful in her story was associated with his name. It was he that annulled her mother's marriage, and had declared herself illegitimate; he was the subverter of her religion, and the head of the new system of worship that had been raised in its stead; and he had joined in a conspiracy to snatch the crown from her brow, and was one of the last to abandon the fortunes of her competitor: a deep sense of private wrong, therefore, united with religious zeal in visiting

his offences with the heaviest punishment. But the blow did not fall all at once: it was deemed prudent to wait till the new queen had become firmly seated on her throne.

King Edward was buried on the 8th of August, on which occasion Cranmer officiated according to the protestant ritual. He was next day ordered to confine himself to the archiepiscopal palace of Lambeth, and to furnish the council with an inventory of his moveable possessions. He was joined in his retirement by Peter Martyr, who had fled from Oxford, where the reformed doctrines had not even yet taken root, and who confirmed the fears of the archbishop, that their joint labours in establishing a scriptural system of worship would be unproductive during the reign of the present monarch. Cranmer conducted himself with great humility; so much so, indeed, as to induce his enemies to give out "that he was ready to submit himself in all things" to the will of the council. To add to his anxiety, it was communicated to him that mass had been performed in Canterbury cathedral with his alleged consent and permission. The honest zeal of Peter Martyr felt indignant at the imputation, and, by his advice, Cranmer gave it a public denial. The declaration which he drew up on this occasion does honour, by its boldness, to his courage and sincerity. It stated, "that as the devil had at all times set on his instruments by lies to defame the servants of God, so he was now more than ordinarily busy. For whereas king Henry had begun the correcting the abuses of the mass, which his son had brought to a further perfection; and so the Lord's Supper was restored to its first institution, and was celebrated according to the pattern of the primitive church: now the devil, intending to bring the mass again into its room, as being his own invention, had stirred up some to give out that it had been set up in Canterbury by his, the said Cranmer's, order; and it was said, that he had undertaken to sing mass to the queen's majesty, both at king Edward's funeral at St. Paul's and other places;

and though, for these twenty years, he had despised all such errors and false reports of him as were spread abroad, yet he now thought it not fit to lie under such misrepresentations; therefore he protests to all the world that the mass was not set up at Canterbury by his, the said Cranmer's, order, but that a fawning hypocritical monk had done it without his knowledge; and for what he was said to have undertaken to the queen, her majesty knew well how false that was, offering, if he might obtain her leave for it, to maintain that every thing in the communion service that was set out by their most innocent and good king Edward was according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles and the ancient church for many ages, to which the mass was contrary, being full of errors and abuses; and although Peter Martyr was by some called an ignorant man, he with him, or other four or five such as he could choose, would be ready to defend, not only their Book of Common Prayer and the other rites of their service, but the whole doctrines and order of religion set forth by the late king as more pure and more agreeable to the word of God than any sort of religion that had been in England for a thousand years before it, provided that things should be judged by the Scriptures, and that the reasonings on both sides should be faithfully written down."*

On the 8th, Cranmer was summoned to answer for it before the council. On the 13th, "after a long and serious debate," he was committed to the Tower, for matters of treason against the queen, and for dispersing of seditious bills. He was attainted in the ensuing parliament of treason, and the fruits of his archbishoprick sequestered. The charge of treason was, however, forgiven or abandoned, it being determined that he should be proceeded against for heresy alone.

The rebellion of Wyat produced the usual effect of unsuccessful insurrection; it strengthened the power of

* Burnet.—This bold declaration was publicly read in Cheapside and elsewhere on the 5th of September.

the crown, and removed the obstacle of public inertia to its favourite measures. With its suppression began those burnings and persecutions which have entailed upon this reign the lasting odium of posterity. It was now resolved to proceed to extremities with Cranmer and the other leaders of the reformation. From the Tower, where they had been confined for the last seven months, the archbishop, Latimer, and Ridley were conducted to Oxford, there to hold a public disputation with the catholic theologians on the great points of difference between the two churches. The catholic was then the religion of the sovereign: of course the moderator in the disputation decided in favour of the divines of the state worship; Cranmer and his associates were declared to be vanquished and contumacious, and the hall resounded with the cries of "Vincit veritas." It was in vain that they declared to the council that they had been silenced by noise *, and not by argument; and that they appealed to the judgment of the Almighty from the decision of the moderator. The council hearkened not to their prayer, and left them to their fate. Two days after the decision against them they were brought before the commissioners, and asked whether they would subscribe to the ancient worship. They unanimously refused, and were condemned as obstinate heretics. The usual formalities of the papal code in heretical prosecutions were gone through. Cranmer was cited as an archbishop to appear before the pope within the canonical period (eighty days) laid down on such occasions, and at the expiration of the eighty days was delivered over to the secular power. He was accused of blasphemy and heresy for his writings against the Roman worship, of perjury for violating his oath of canonical obedience, and of incontinency for having married after his vow of celibacy; and was declared to be contuma-

* Cranmer, in his letter to the council, says, "I never knewe nor hearde of a more confusied disputacyon in all my life. For albeit there was one appoynted to dispute agaynste me, yet evrey man spak hys mynde, and brought forth what hym liked, without order; and such hast was made that no answere coulde be suffered to be given."

cious for not having (and he was a prisoner all the time) appeared at Rome, according to the letter of the citation. He was now in hourly expectation of his fate — the rather as Gardiner and Bonner, whom he had treated with great harshness in the late reign, were the queen's most influential counsellors. From them he could expect no favour: the implacable hatred of polemical antagonists being, in both, inflamed by the recollection of personal oppression. Had the archbishop been at this time led to the scaffold, — such was the resigned firmness of his mind, — his name would have probably been spared the stain of his subsequent recantations.

Hitherto Cranmer had displayed unremittent courage in his sufferings, and was prepared to prove his sincerity by his death. But with delay and suspense came vague hopes, and a damping of zeal and courage. From the window of his cell, he had seen his friends and fellow-labourers in the vineyard, Ridley and Latimer, led to execution.

The excruciating torments which they were made to endure shook his resolution. Hopes were held out to him that his life might be spared if he relented from his obstinacy; he wavered, and expressed a wish to have a conference with the legate. This fit of irresolution, however, soon passed over; and having expressed his regret for his weakness, he wrote a long letter to the queen in defence of the protestant doctrines. But Gardiner was well acquainted with that want of firmness which was the blemish of the archbishop's character, and knew that, having once hesitated, it was highly probable he would hesitate again. Cranmer was accordingly told to prepare himself for his speedy execution. The intelligence had its intended effect; his spirit was broken by confinement, his courage gave way, and death by burning presented itself to his imagination with all its features of horror. Six instruments of recantation still bear witness to his "human infirmity." Thus —

——— "The base drachm
Doth all the noble substance often dout
To his own scandal."

and thus the one defect of Cranmer's mind led to acts which his frequent heroism scarcely atoned for. He now feigned himself a reconvert to the Catholic doctrines, and for six weeks openly condemned the "errors of Luther and Zuinglius, acknowledged the pope's supremacy, the seven sacraments, the corporal presence in the eucharist, purgatory, prayer for departed souls, the invocation of saints, to which was added his being sorry for his former errors; and concluded, exhorting all that had been deceived by his example or doctrines to return to the unity of the church, and protesting that he had signed his recantation willingly, only for the discharge of his conscience."*

Fortunately for the reputation of Cranmer, these humiliating recantations were not rewarded by a pardon. To Ridley and Latimer life had been offered on their renouncing their "heresies;" but it was decided in the council that no recantation should save the archbishop. His political offences, it was said, might be overlooked; but his offences against religion required that he should suffer for the sake of example. A writ for his execution was accordingly despatched to Oxford, and a day fixed. But Cranmer with his firmness lost his dignity of mind. With the hope of still averting his fate, he signed another document, in which he declared he was not actuated by fear or favour, and that his former recantation was made unsolicitedly, for the ease of his own conscience and the instruction of others. A letter to cardinal Pole,—he knew he need not address Gardiner,—accompanied this document, in which he begged that prelate's influence to obtain him a few days' respite, in order that he might give the world a still more convincing proof of his repentance. The respite was granted; and Cranmer, in a sixth confession, declared that he had been a greater persecutor of the church than Paul, and that he wished, like that apostle, to make amends. He could not rebuild what he had destroyed;

* Burnet, ii. 2. The reader will see six recantations, quoted at length, in Todd's Life of Cranmer, just published.

but as the penitent thief on the cross by the testimony of his lips obtained mercy, so he trusted that he by the offering of his lips should move the clemency of the Almighty. He was an offender beyond the pale of temporal or eternal mercy; he had blasphemed the sacrament, and had deprived men of the benefit of the eucharist. To conclude, he entreated for forgiveness from the pope and the king and queen, and pity from all Christians.

Fortunately, we repeat, for Cranmer's fame, his offence against the honour of Mary's birth had made her inexorably resolved on his execution. Had he been then pardoned, and permitted to eke out his existence in obscurity, his name would now be a by-word synonymous with all that is loathsome in hypocrisy, cowardice, and apostacy. He would have been so degraded in his own eyes, that he could never have ventured again to present himself to that church of which he was the founder, but from which the fear of death had made him apostatise. Again, we repeat, his reputation is indebted to the profound hatred of the queen, who, unmoved by his cries for mercy, and his expressions of deep remorse, desired the law to take its course.

The 21st of March was the day fixed for his execution. To the last moment, Cranmer clung to the hope of mercy; and was astounded when a Spanish friar announced to him, on the fatal morning, that his hours were numbered, and that he should prepare himself for his last earthly trial. The friar then handed to him a paper, to be read at the stake, as a dying testimony of his repentance. It was a summary of his recantations. Cranmer signed it; and having transcribed it, kept a copy for his own use. When the friar had departed he altered his copy, and made it equivalent to a disavowal of all his former abjurations and denials. At the usual hour the procession set forward: it halted at the church of St. Mary, where the last sermon was preached by a Dr. Cole. The archbishop stood on a platform opposite to the pulpit, according to an eye-witness (quoted by

Strype), "the very image of sorrow." Remorse for his recent unworthy conduct had taken entire possession of his soul. His face was bathed in tears, and expressed "great inward confusion;" and his eyes were sometimes lifted up to heaven, now fixed downward on earth, "as one ashamed of himself." The sermon having been concluded, the preacher called on Cranmer to declare his faith. The archbishop then took out his paper: all were prepared for a repetition of his recantations, the rather as the merits of his conversion had been dwelt upon by Dr. Cole in his sermon. He was heard with profound attention, till he "spake to that which, he said, troubled his conscience more than any thing he had ever done in his whole life; which was the subscribing a paper contrary to the truth, and against his conscience, out of fear of death and love of life; and when he came to the fire, he was resolved that that hand that had signed it should burn first." He then repeated, that his former opinions on the papal usurpation, and on the eucharist, were those he died in. "Upon this there was a wonderful confusion in the assembly." Lord Williams called to him to remember himself, and play the Christian. "I do," replied Cranmer, with tears: "it *is now too late to dissemble;* I must now speak the truth. I have been hitherto a hater of falsehood and a lover of simplicity, and never before this time have I dissembled." He was immediately led to the stage which had been erected for his execution, opposite Baliol College, where he put off his clothes in haste, and standing in his shirt, and without shoes, was fastened with a chain to the stake. Some of the crowd urged him to declare in favour of his former recantations. He answered, showing his hand, "This is the hand that wrote it, and therefore it shall suffer punishment." Fire being applied to him, he stretched out his right hand into the flame, and held it there unmoved (except that once with it he wiped his face) till it was consumed, crying with a loud voice, "This hand hath offended — this unworthy right hand."

At last, the fire getting up, he soon expired, never stirring or crying out all the while, only keeping his eyes fixed on heaven, and repeating more than once, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Cranmer thus perished, in the 67th year of his age.

It is hardly necessary to offer additional remarks on the character of Cranmer, as, we persuade ourselves, its leading features have been sufficiently displayed to the reader in the course of our narrative. His contemporaries unite in attributing to him all the virtues that adorn a private station. He was humble and affectionately kind to the poor, ever attentive to their wants, ever happy in relieving them. To the rich and powerful he is also represented as uniformly courteous and respectful, equally remote from obsequiousness and, what has been considered as not unusual in men of his rank, episcopal arrogance. In the mildness and yielding gentleness of his temper, and in the "vicious feeblenesses" to which the excess of those excellent qualities invariably leads, he very much resembled Philip Melancthon. Like that amiable man, too, he wanted the enthusiastic confidence in the goodness of his cause which spurns the aid of unworthy expedients, and fearlessly pursues its straightforward course in all times and seasons. But here the resemblance ends. Cranmer possessed neither the genius nor the learning of the German theologian; and though naturally as candid and truth-loving, did not exhibit the same ingenuous buoyancy in troubled waters. The truth is, the very virtues of his character united with its defects in unfitting him for high stations in times like those which it was his fate to live in.

He was constitutionally wedded to peace and quietness; and wanting, as we have seen, firmness and decision of purpose, and the higher and sterner elements of moral greatness, was too glad to embrace repose from toil and danger upon almost any terms. Hence we may conclude that, had his lot been confined to private life, his conduct would have been unexceptionably amiable,

and himself universally respected; and hence we may also affirm, that under no circumstances could he have been a great man. As it is, we pity much more than we condemn him, and willingly shut our eyes on his defects and errors, when we recollect his cruel death, and his services in aid of the reformation. These it is that have snatched his name from oblivion, or from indifference, perhaps contempt, and that, in the teeth of mutually admitted facts, have kept alive a controversy on the real merits of his character. By our own zealots he is held up to our admiration, as the most glorious and faultless martyr of the Church of England; by the Romanists, his name is branded with every epithet of meanness and inconsistency: as if, in this most absurd logomachy, the character of the reformation, or the gospel purity of the rival creeds, were to be determined, or for a moment affected, by the conduct of individuals; and as if it was not among the most wonderful of the dispensations of Providence, which "out of evil seeks to bring forth good," that it has sometimes been pleased to employ the guiltiest instruments in effecting its highest and holiest purposes.

WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURLEIGH.

1520—1598.

William Cecil*, descended from an ancient and respectable family, was born at Bourn in Lincolnshire, in the year 1520.† Both his father and grandfather held honourable appointments under Henry VIII. His father was master of the robes; an office, in that age, of considerable distinction. During his early education, his progress either exhibited nothing remarkable, or has been overlooked by his biographers, amidst the splendour of his succeeding transactions; for we are merely informed, that he received the first rudiments of learning at the grammar schools of Grantham and Stamford.‡ But at St. John's college, Cambridge, to which he was removed in the fifteenth year of his age, he gave strong indications of the qualities calculated to raise him to future eminence. He suffered no irregularity to interrupt his pursuits; and seemed resolute to excel his fellow-students, by the certain means of incessant application. That he might daily devote several hours to study, without any hazard of interruption, he made an agreement with the bell-ringer to be called up every morning at four o'clock. The strength of his constitution, however, did not correspond with the ardour of his mind; for, in consequence of much sitting, without proper intervals of exercise, he contracted a painful humour in his legs; and though subsequently cured of

* This life is taken by permission from Macdiarmid's British Statesmen
† Lord Burleigh's Diary, in the British Museum, Harleian MS. No. 46.
‡ Life of William Lord Burghley, by one of his domestics, edited by Collins in 1732, p. 6.

this distemper, his physicians considered it as a principal cause of that inveterate gout which embittered the latter part of his life.*

His indefatigable industry soon led to a proficiency which drew on him the particular notice of his teachers. The master of the college encouraged his perseverance by occasional presents†, but his ambition seems to have required no such stimulant. He began, at sixteen, to put in practice the methods then usual of acquiring literary celebrity, by delivering a public lecture. His first topic was the logic of the schools; but, three years afterwards, he ventured to comment on the Greek language, which had hitherto been cultivated with more eagerness than success. He was afterwards ambitious of excelling as a general scholar; and successively directed his industry to the various branches of literature then cultivated at the university.‡

When he was supposed to have laid a sufficient foundation of useful knowledge, he was removed from the university to Gray's Inn, where he applied himself to the study of the law, with the same method and industry as he had observed at Cambridge. He found leisure also for several collateral pursuits: the antiquities of the kingdom, and more especially the pedigrees and fortunes of the most distinguished families, occupied much of his attention; and such was his progress in these pursuits, that no man of his time was accounted a more complete adept in heraldry.§ This species of information, had he adhered to the destination for the bar, might have been of little utility; but, in his career of a statesman, it often proved of essential advantage. His practice was to record with his pen every thing worthy of notice which occurred to him either in reading or observation, arranging this information in the most methodical manner,—a singular example of diligence, which is authenticated to posterity by collections

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 6.
† Fuller's History of the University of Cambridge, p. 95.
‡ Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 7.
§ Bacon's Works, vol. iv. p. 358. edit. 1740.

of his manuscripts, still preserved in many public and private libraries. While, from this practice, he derived, besides other advantages, an uncommon facility in committing his thoughts to writing, he neglected not to cultivate an accomplishment still more essential to his intended profession, — a ready and graceful enunciation. By frequenting various companies, and entering into free discussion, he learnt to express himself with ease and confidence; while the extent of his information, and the soundness of his judgment, prevented his fluency from degenerating into declamation.

These acquisitions, united to a singular industry, must have raised him, at an early period, to great eminence in his profession, had not an incident, which introduced him to the notice of Henry VIII., soon diverted his attention to a different career. Cecil, having accidentally met, in the presence chamber, with two Irish priests, who had come to court in the train of O'Neil, their chieftain, happened to enter into an argument with them on the pope's supremacy, of which they were zealous abettors; and, by his superior knowledge and fluency, so baffled his antagonists, that they began to vent their uneasy feelings in violent expressions. This contest was conducted in Latin; and the particulars of it having been reported to Henry, the monarch, pleased with this indication of talents, and still more with the successful refutation of the pope's supremacy, desired to see the young man; and, in the course of a long conversation, conceived so favourable an opinion of his abilities, that he resolved to take him into his service, and directed his father (the master of the robes) to find out an office which might suit him. As no suitable situation happened to be vacant at the time, his father pitched on the reversion of the *custos brevium* in the Common Pleas, which was readily granted.†

From the time of this introduction at court, which happened within the first year of his attendance at

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 9.

Gray's Inn, and in the twenty-second year of his age, though Cecil still continued his application to the law, his mind appears to have been more intently fixed on political advancement. A very prudent and honourable alliance, which he this year contracted by marriage, proved an effectual channel to future preferment. Introduced by his father-in-law, sir John Cheke, a man of great respectability and influence, to the earl of Hertford, maternal uncle to the young prince Edward, and afterwards better known as duke of Somerset, he was enabled to cultivate a connection which, in a few years, elevated him to the highest offices.*

About the commencement of the reign of Edward VI. he succeeded to his office of custos brevium, which brought him a revenue of 240*l.* a year, equal to more than 1000*l.* in the present age. While this accession to his fortune placed him in comparative affluence, and enabled him to prosecute his plans more at ease, a new family connection, which he formed about the same time, opened to him the fairest access to royal patronage. His first wife having died in the second year of their marriage, leaving him a son, he now married a daughter of sir Anthony Cook, the director of the young king's studies, a gentleman who derived from his situation an influence confirmed by his talents and virtue.† Few men have more directly accelerated their rise by matrimonial alliances than Cecil; yet such were the excellent qualities of his lady, that we might consider his attachment to her the result rather of personal affection, than of a view to political advancement.

His preferment under the new reign was not neglected by Somerset, to whose friendship he was recommended by various circumstances. While his talents and consummate application rendered him most useful to any one placed at the head of affairs, his decided attachment to the reformation gave him at this period a particular

* Camden's Annal. Eliz, p. 774.
† Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 9.

claim to public trusts. The protector, eager to extend his popularity by accelerating those changes in religion, which were now so generally desired, committed the departments of government to the hands of such as were known to be firm advocates of the reformation; and, on this occasion, he created Cecil master of the requests, — an appointment of trust and distinction.*

In the latter part of the same year, the young statesman attended his patron in the expedition against Scotland, and was present at the battle of Pinkey, where the arms of England proved so decisively victorious. Here he very narrowly escaped destruction: a friend, observing a cannon directly pointed at him, pushed him out of its line, and, in the very act, had his own arm unfortunately shattered by the ball.† Cecil, with his usual diligence, wrote an account of this expedition. On returning home, he enjoyed various advantages for prosecuting his views at court, and his talents were well calculated to second his opportunities. The insight into the characters of those around him, which he derived from careful habits of observation, enabled him to suit his behaviour to persons and circumstances; and the prudent reserve of his conversation, joined to a perfect command of temper, preserved him from those imprudences which so often bar the way to promotion. He applied himself to gain the entire confidence of Somerset; and having unrestrained access to the young prince, both from the friendship of the protector, and the situation of his father-in-law, he quickly acquired the esteem and attachment of Edward. Somerset readily listened to the solicitations of his nephew in behalf of their mutual favourite, and, in the following year, promoted Cecil to the office of secretary of state.‡

With a rapidity proportioned to his merits and his address, Cecil had now attained one of the highest stations in the government; but his continuance on this envied height depended so much on the conduct of

* Life of William Lord Burghley. p. 10. † Ibid.
‡ Lord Burghley's Diary.

others, that the most consummate prudence on his part could not render him secure. He, also, was drawn along in the fall of his patron, which took place in little more than a year. Somerset appears to have been one of those unfortunate men, whose errors proceed rather from weakness than from vice, and whose good intentions are perpetually counteracted by a lamentable imprudence. Ambitious, rather than qualified to govern, he had taken advantage of his popularity to engross, in his own person, the whole powers of the council of regency, to which Henry, by his will, had intrusted the government; and though he showed no inclination to abuse his authority, yet he displayed his ascendancy with an offensive ostentation. A profusion and magnificence, which might have served to increase his influence, contributed, by his imprudent management, to ruin the popularity which he so fondly courted. While he too eagerly grasped at wealth to support his expenses, a fortune which he suddenly amassed made his integrity suspected; and, on his pulling down several churches to procure more splendid materials for erecting his palace, the act was reprobated as sacrilege, and his impiety regarded with horror. Even the best intended measures often became, in his unskilful hands, the source of new calamities. By his rash and ill concerted attempts to redress the grievances of the common people, he not only provoked the nobility, but led the inflamed minds of the people themselves into excesses, which he was afterwards obliged to repress by severe military executions. His popularity at length became so much reduced, that the other members of the council of regency, whom he had stripped of their just authority, ventured to attempt his overthrow; and, by a well planned conspiracy, succeeded in committing him and his principal adherents to the Tower.

The chief actor in this plot against Somerset was the earl of Warwick, son to Dudley, the infamous tool of Henry VII.'s extortions. Warwick inherited all the avarice and faithlessness of his father; and being pos-

sessed of talents both for peace and war, he procured the patronage of Henry VIII., who could readily overlook hereditary taint contracted in executing the mandates of tyranny. By the favour of that monarch, Dudley was successively raised to the rank of nobility, created an admiral, and appointed a member of the council of regency. Yet, inflamed with an ambition which no subordinate honours could satiate, he looked on the minority of Edward as a favourable opportunity for engrossing the chief direction of the government; and only delayed his attempts until the increasing unpopularity of Somerset, to which he contributed by every art, should ensure their accomplishment. Succeeding, by the conspiracy which he had planned, to the power, though not to the title, of the protector, he surrounded the young king with his creatures, compelled the council to submit to his dictates, and proceeded to secure his ascendancy by new acquisitions of fortune and rank. The last earl of Northumberland having died without issue, and his brother having been attainted, the title was now extinct, and the estate vested in the crown. Warwick procured a grant of these large possessions, and made himself be created duke of Northumberland.

The views of this new ruler did not long prove adverse to Cecil; for, after having been detained in the Tower about three months, he was discharged, and again found himself on the road to fortune. Northumberland, though awed by the previous popularity of Somerset, entertained little apprehension of his talents, and justly calculated that his partisans might be weaned by new prospects from their attachment to so feeble a leader. In Cecil he perceived the double advantage of influence over the young king, and of an uninterrupted application to business, while others wasted their time in cabals and intrigues. Aware, also, that with Cecil ambition was a predominant principle, while his prudence was such as to divert him from all dangerous schemes, Northumberland might expect that this statesman would be faithful to those immediately possessed of power, and would pre-

fer the prospect of present aggrandisement to the forlorn generosity of adhering to the ruined fortunes of Somerset. But whatever were the views of Northumberland, Cecil was, by his means, again appointed secretary of state; and, receiving the honour of knighthood, was admitted into the privy council.*

This sudden release and subsequent elevation, by the enemy of his old patron, have exposed the motives of Cecil to suspicion. It has been alleged, that he had a secret understanding with Northumberland even before the fall of Somerset, and that his new preferment was the reward of his treachery. But while no grounds are produced for these accusations, the events which they are adduced to explain seem otherwise sufficiently accounted for. In joining Northumberland, Cecil abandoned none of his principles; for the same measures, both in regard to religion and politics, were now pursued, as under the protector: and if his conduct, in uniting with the decided enemy of his patron, be thought little consistent with honour or generosity, he only acted a part which Somerset himself speedily imitated. Northumberland, having completed the degradation of his rival, by extorting from him a public confession that he had been guilty of rashness, folly, and indiscretion, accounted him now so little formidable, that he ventured to affect the praise of generosity, by restoring him, not only to liberty, but to his seat in the council. Somerset, as mean in adversity as ostentatious in his better fortune, gladly accepted the boon; and, after all the indignities which he had undergone, consented to give his daughter, lady Jane Seymour, in marriage to lord Dudley, the son of his adversary.

But the ambition of Northumberland, and the indiscretion of Somerset, soon converted their external appearances of amity into more fatal dissensions. Although the late protector, by his imprudence and want of spirit, had become much degraded in the public estimation, yet, in the day of his humiliation, the envy once felt

* King Edward's Journal. Stow's Annals.

towards him subsided into a better feeling; while the pride and ambition of his rival failed not to excite considerable odium. His reviving popularity awakened the jealousy of Northumberland, and his indiscretion, ere long, afforded a pretext for his destruction. While the mortifications which he had experienced could not fail to rankle in his bosom, his crafty antagonist endeavoured to goad him on to some rash and criminal enterprise. The creatures of Northumberland, who gained his confidence to precipitate his ruin, first inflamed his resentment, and then caught his hasty expressions of revenge; they suggested to him plans for insurrection, for assassinating Northumberland, and then disclosed them as accusations against him. When a sufficient number of such charges had been accumulated, Somerset was suddenly arrested; tried before a jury of peers, among whom were Northumberland and some of his principal enemies; found guilty of a capital crime; and led, along with several of his friends, to the scaffold.

The part which Cecil acted, during these renewed calamities of his early patron, seems more reconcilable to prudence than to gratitude. It is said, that when Somerset, some time before his arrest, sent for him, and communicated to him his apprehensions, the secretary, instead of suggesting any means to avoid his impending danger, coldly replied, "That if he was innocent, he might trust to that; and if he were otherwise, he could only pity him."* Pity, indeed, if he really felt it, was all that he bestowed; for it does not appear that he interposed, either publicly or privately, to avert the destruction of his former patron. And when we consider the character of Somerset, we must allow that such an interposition would have been as imprudent as it was likely to be unavailing. The weakness and irresolution of this nobleman were such, that no dependence could be placed on his executing any scheme proposed for his safety; and as he was surrounded by spies who insinuated themselves into his confidence, any beneficial intelligence commu-

* King Edward's Journal.

nicated to him, could scarcely have failed to reach his inveterate adversary. In these circumstances, Cecil, by attempting the preservation of Somerset, would have incurred an imminent hazard of sharing in his destruction. Without benefiting his patron, he would probably have lost his fortune, his liberty, or his life; leaving behind him only the praise of unsuccessful generosity.

But whether we respect his prudence, or censure his ingratitude on this occasion, we cannot but applaud his conduct as a minister. While the court of England teemed with cabals, which occupied the incessant attention of the other public men, the secretary was diligently employed in executing his official duties, and in devising schemes for the discharge of the public debt, or the improvement of commerce. There still remains a complete statement of the king's debts in the month of February, 1551, printed from a manuscript drawn up by Cecil, and which must have comprehended the whole of the public responsibility at that period, since neither the debts nor the revenues of the king were as yet separated from those of the nation.*

An important change, effected about this time in the commerce of London, is also attributed to his counsels. The carrying trade of the north of Europe, and of England in particular, had hitherto been engrossed, almost exclusively, by the merchants of the Hanse Towns. As the foreign intercourse, conducted through this channel, was found particularly productive to the revenue, it became an object with our monarchs to promote it to the utmost; and with this view, Henry III. induced a company of these merchants to settle in England, by the lure of a patent containing various privileges, exempting them from the heavy duties paid by other aliens, and placing them nearly on a footing with natives. This corporation was called, from their place of residence, the merchants of the Steel-yard, and effectually excluded all rivals from a competition — other foreigners by their exclusive privileges, and the English by their superior capital and skill.

* See this paper in Strype's Memorials of Edward VI., book ii.

They continued, accordingly, from the time of their settlement, to engross nearly the whole continental trade of England. Their commerce was advantageous to the natives, as it opened a market to their produce, and induced them to devote their labour and capital to agriculture and manufactures; but it was attended, in the eye of the public, with various disadvantages. The gains of each individual, who partook of this monopoly, were apparently greater than those of the natives engaged in agriculture, manufactures, or internal commerce; and the collective wealth of these foreign merchants was doubly conspicuous from their residence in one spot. The jealousy of the English was strongly excited. They complained that the natives had but toil for their portion, while strangers ran away with all the profit. Besides these imaginary evils, this mode of carrying on trade was attended with some real disadvantages. As it was chiefly conducted by foreign vessels and foreign seamen, it afforded little accession to the maritime strength of the country; a circumstance which, on the breaking out of a war, was felt as a serious evil. Moreover, these merchants, on realising a fortune, were apt to depart, and transfer to their own country that capital which, in the hands of natives, would have improved the soil, and accelerated the industry of this realm. The native merchants had often remonstrated against the privileges of these foreigners; but Cecil seems to have been the first minister who effectually attended to their complaints. In consequence of his representations to the council, the merchants of the Steel-yard were deprived of their charter, and subjected to the same impositions as other aliens.*

From this measure, as it was speedily followed by a large increase of the shipping and foreign commerce of England, Cecil has derived much reputation; yet, it is but too indicative of the unacquaintance of the age with the principles of trade. To abrogate the monopoly was a measure of evident propriety, in as much as, like all

* Hayward's Life and Reign of Edward VI.

monopolies, it tended to limit the extent of commercial dealings, obliging our countrymen to sell their commodities somewhat lower, and to pay for foreign articles somewhat higher than they would have done had the competition been open. But, in what way ought this irregularity to have been remedied? Not merely by cancelling the privileges of the Steel-yard merchants, and subjecting them to the same extra duties as other aliens, but by putting all merchants, whether natives or foreign, on a footing of equality. Such a measure would, it may be alleged, have retarded the rise of the native merchants, inferior as they then were to foreigners in capital and experience: but in this, as in all other cases, the course which industry and capital would of themselves have taken, would have been the most advantageous to all parties. Our merchants, confining themselves for a season to the inland trade, it would have expanded more promptly, when our foreign trade absorbed little of our pecuniary means; and the latter also would have fallen eventually into their hands, in consequence not of acts of exclusion, but of the various advantages possessed by natives over foreigners.

But had Cecil, or any other statesman in that age, attempted to admit foreigners on the footing of natives, he would have been represented by public clamour as aggravating the evil which he professed to remedy. The disadvantages under which Cecil laboured are apparent in the fate of another project, which he entertained for the benefit of commerce. As the means of conveying mercantile intelligence were in former times extremely defective, and the regulations for levying the revenue were very imperfect, it was usual to fix by law a staple or regular market, for the chief commodities of a country, and oblige all its inhabitants to convey them thither for sale. Foreign merchants might thus reckon on a regular market, and government had the best opportunity of levying its imposts both on exports and imports. The staple of our wool, and other chief articles of exportation, was fixed by an early act of parliament in certain towns

of England, but was afterwards, in the reign of Edward III., wholly removed to Calais, which at that period came into our possession.* It was thence transferred to the flourishing but distant port of Antwerp, where it still remained in the reign of Edward VI. Cecil, perceiving the infinite disadvantages to which the exportation of England was subjected by this regulation, proposed to abolish the staple at Antwerp, and, as a far more desirable substitute, to open two free ports in England; one at Southampton, and another at Hull. A paper is still extant, containing the whole of this scheme clearly digested, exhibiting the arguments in its favour, and refuting the objections by which it might be opposed. But his colleagues in office were too little advanced in commercial knowledge, and too much engrossed with state intrigues, to perceive the advantages or concur in the execution of this project.

Cecil, in the mean time, did not neglect to cultivate the attachment of the young king. That prince, whose diligence, knowledge, and discretion, far exceeded his years, seems to have been particularly delighted with a man so eminently distinguished for these qualities. The secretary was admitted into his inmost confidence, and was supposed to have had no small share in the productions ostensibly attributed to Edward. It is said that the princess Mary, on receiving a letter from her brother, exhorting her to abjure the errors of popery, could not help exclaiming as she read it, "Ah! Mr. Cecil's pen has taken great pains here." Yet he never employed his ascendancy over the young prince to procure extravagant grants, after the example which had been set by Somerset, Northumberland, and the other courtiers. Aware that a fortune accumulated by such means always exposed the possessor to envy, and might probably, in these unsettled times, be the cause of his destruction, he preferred the slower but more secure method of acquiring wealth by the economical management of his regular salaries. By his appointment as

* 27 Edward III. cap. vii.

chancellor of the order of the garter, his income now received an addition of a hundred marks a year; and it appears that, after his father's decease, he also held the post of master of the robes.*

Soon after this accession of honour and emolument, he found himself exposed, by his official situation, to dangers which all his prudence seemed insufficient to avert. The young king, who, by the extraordinary virtues and accomplishments of his early youth, had taught the nation to look forward with fond expectation to his more mature years, began to exhibit indubitable symptoms of a rapid decline. Amidst the alarm which this unexpected calamity diffused, the ambitious Northumberland began to meditate more daring plans for the confirmation of his power, and even undertook to fix the succession to the crown in his own family. Four females stood next in the order of inheritance: Mary and Elizabeth, daughters of Henry VIII.; Mary queen of Scots, grand-daughter of Henry's eldest sister; and the duchess of Suffolk, daughter of his second sister. The title of the last, although evidently posterior to the others, Northumberland resolved to enforce as preferable to the whole. He represented to Edward that his two half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, having been declared illegitimate by act of parliament, were for ever debarred from the succession; that the queen of Scots, having been passed over in his father's will, was also to be considered as excluded; and that, even had this objection not existed, she ought to be prevented from reducing England as well as Scotland to a province of France,—an event which, unless prevented by her exclusion, her marriage with the dauphin rendered inevitable. Availing himself of the king's attachment to the protestant religion, he depicted the dangers to which it would be exposed, if such bigoted catholics as either of the Marys ascended the throne; and as this objection did not apply to Edward's favourite sister Elizabeth, who had

* See a letter to him from sir Edward Dymocke, in Lodge's Illustrations of British History, vol. i. p. 185.

been educated in the principles of the reformation, he urged that it was impossible to devise any pretext for excluding one sister, without excluding both. The prince, enfeebled by disease, and surrounded by the creatures of Northumberland, was at length overcome by his arguments and importunities, and consented to fix the succession in the duchess of Suffolk, who was willing to wave her title in favour of her daughter, the lady Jane Grey. To complete this artful scheme, Northumberland now procured the lady Jane in marriage to his fourth son, lord Guilford Dudley, and enjoyed the prospect of continuing to manage the affairs of the kingdom at his pleasure, and of transmitting the kingdom to his posterity.

For this alteration in the succession to the throne, Northumberland obtained from the prince a patent, and required that it should be signed by all the members of the privy council; a concession which the dread of his vengeance extorted, even from those most averse to the transaction. Cecil, among the rest, affixed his name to the patent; but whether from inclination or compulsion has been disputed. While he is charged by some with having been very active in the enterprises of the duke, and with having assisted in drawing up the instrument for altering the succession*, he himself, in a memorial which he afterwards drew up in his justification, asserts that both threats and promises were employed in vain to extort his concurrence in the attempt; that he refused to subscribe the patent as a privy councillor; and that he was at length only prevailed on, by the king's earnest entreaty, to write his name as witness to the royal signature. The character of Cecil leaves us, indeed, no room to suspect that he entered into the views of Northumberland farther than his own immediate safety required. He might have been sufficiently willing, had a fair opportunity offered, to set aside Mary, the next heiress, from whose bigoted attachment to popery he had nothing to hope, and every thing to apprehend. But the reasons

* Hayward, vol. ii. p. 237.

which might have led him to oppose Mary would have induced him to support Elizabeth; and he knew that the objections against the title of lady Jane were too weighty to be removed by the patent of a minor on his death-bed. Although parliament, with whom the ultimate right of confirming or altering the order of succession was acknowledged to reside, had enabled Henry VIII. to dispose of the crown by will, yet, as it had not empowered Edward to alter this disposition, his patent could not confer a legal title till ratified by a new act of the legislature. But amidst the general indignation excited by the ambition and rapacity of Northumberland, was such a sanction likely to be obtained? or, if obtained, to ensure a general acquiescence? Influenced by such considerations, Cecil seems to have withdrawn himself, as far as personal safety would allow, from an enterprise originating in extravagant ambition, and likely to terminate in the ruin of its abettors. It is said, that when he found the project in agitation, he made such a disposition of his effects as might give them the best chance of security, in the event of his being imprisoned, or obliged to quit the kingdom.*

On the death of Edward, Cecil found himself, along with the rest of the privy council, in the power of Northumberland; but perceiving that total failure was soon to overtake the illegal measures of that infatuated nobleman, he resolutely refused to draw up the proclamation declaring the title of lady Jane, or to write in its vindication; and the duke was not then in a situation to punish his disobedience. Soon afterwards he found means, along with the other privy councillors, to escape, and join Mary, who had already been proclaimed queen, and who was pleased to receive him very graciously. As he knew that, among her partisans, he had many enemies, and that they had already made some unsuccessful attempts to prejudice her against him, he took advantage of her present favourable disposition, to obtain a general pardon for whatever might have been culpable in his past

* Burnet's Hist. of Reform. vol. ii. p. 233.

conduct; and, with this indemnity, he determined for the present to retire from public affairs. Mary, acquainted with his sagacity and great talents for business, was desirous to retain him in her service, and tendered to him the appointment which he had hitherto held; but, as the change of his religion was an indispensable condition, he could not be prevailed on to accept these offers.* He was attached firmly and conscientiously to the reformed church; but had his religious principles been less sincere, prudence might have withheld him from embarking in the new government. The bigotry of Mary, and the violence of her prime minister, bishop Gardiner, made it easy to foresee that the restoration of the catholic religion would be attempted by fire and sword; and in the conflict between the zeal of the court, and the resistance of the great majority of the nation, it was impossible not to anticipate sanguinary executions and dangerous convulsions. Cecil appears to have adopted the resolution of keeping aloof from the cabals of either party, and of cultivating the private friendship of some of the new ministers, without giving any sanction to their public measures. By this means he both provided for his own safety, and was enabled to give occasional support to the cause which he favoured, without exciting the jealousy and resentment of the government.

The court soon became divided into two factions, of which the one urged the extirpation of heretics by fire and sword, while the other, confiding in the ultimate success of what they deemed the true religion, were of opinion that these violent methods would only harden the minds of men against it. Of these parties, the former was ruled by bishop Gardiner, a man very indifferent about religion, but naturally of a severe and violent temper, and exasperated, by some injuries, against the protestants; while the moderate party was headed by cardinal Pole, a man extremely devoted to his religious tenets, but too politic, if not too humane, to at-

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 11.

tempt their propagation by violence. Expecting the safety of the protestants chiefly from the ascendancy of the cardinal's counsels, Cecil attached himself warmly to his interests. He had procured himself to be nominated one of the honorary mission which had been sent by the court to invite over this prelate, who resided in Italy at the time of Mary's accession; and he appears to have exerted himself successfully in acquiring his confidence, since we find him, in the following year, attending Pole on an embassy to the continent.

It soon, however, became necessary for Cecil to take a more open part in defence of the protestants. The parliament having been induced, by the intrigues of Gardiner, and the bribes which he scattered among the members, to revive the old sanguinary laws against heretics, the court proceeded to carry them into execution with the most unrelenting cruelty. Bishops, venerable for age and virtue, were burnt in their own dioceses, and women are said to have been thrown, in the agonies of childbirth, into the midst of the flames.* Nothing could exceed the horror of the cruelties perpetrated, or the frivolity of the accusations on which the sufferers were condemned. Arrested on mere suspicion, and without having made any open profession of their creed, they were allowed only the alternative of signing a list of religious articles presented to them, or of being committed to the flames. All the established forms of law were now abandoned, and the prosecution of heretics intrusted by the crown to a set of commissioners, whose unlimited powers to try and condemn any one on whom their suspicions might happen to alight, took away the protection of innocence, and rendered the subjects the sport of caprice or malignity.

A general horror and indignation were the natural consequences of these cruelties; and in the new parliament, which was summoned to meet in 1555, the court was made to feel the preponderancy of the protestant

* Burnet, vol. iii. p. 264., from an account of these transactions written or corrected by Cecil.

interest, and the futility of its sanguinary proceedings. Notwithstanding the manifest danger of opposition, several measures proposed by government were vehemently resisted by the commons, and some wholly rejected. They were with difficulty prevailed on to pass an act enabling the queen to restore to the church merely those tenths, first-fruits, and impropriations, which remained in the hands of the crown; and could be induced to grant a portion only of the supplies demanded, though by no means exorbitant. They threw out two bills relative to religion;—one for incapacitating such as were remiss in the prosecution of heretics from being justices of the peace, and another for confiscating the estates of those who had quitted the kingdom on the score of religion.*

In this opposition to the measures of the court, Cecil, who had been chosen, without solicitation, one of the members for Lincolnshire, bore a distinguished part; and the rejection of the bill for confiscating the estates of the exiles is, in particular, attributed to the force of his eloquence. This manly conduct exposed him to considerable danger, and he was once called before the privy council; but while the others involved in the same accusation with him were sent to the Tower, he succeeded in obtaining a hearing before he should be committed, and made such a satisfactory defence as procured his immediate acquittal.† The discretion of his conduct had, indeed, softened the rancour of his religious opponents, and procured him many friends among the catholics, though convinced of his decided attachment to the protestant cause. The light in which his opposition in this parliament appeared to himself, we learn from the diary which he has left behind him:—"On the 21st of October," says he, "the parliament met at Westminster, and I discharged my duty, as a member, with some danger; for although I had been elected against my inclination, yet I uttered my sentiments freely. I incurred

* Burnet, vol. ii. p. 322.
† Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 13.

much displeasure by this conduct; but it was better to obey God than men." Having, in the next parliament, been again chosen to represent the county of Lincoln, he maintained the cause of the persecuted protestants with the same discreet but undeviating resolution.

While Cecil, by the reserve and moderation of his conduct, escaped the suspicion of the court, he was privately turning his views towards those changes in the government, which he foresaw would soon take place. It was every day more apparent that the princess Elizabeth would ascend the throne, and that her elevation would not be long deferred. No prospect now remained that Mary would leave offspring behind her, and the distempers of her mind and body seemed rapidly to subdue her constitution. While a dropsy, which she had at first mistaken for pregnancy, and aggravated by improper treatment, daily impaired her strength, the bad success of all her schemes for the restoration of popery, the general hatred excited by her cruelties, the loss of Calais, which was attributed to her negligence, the cold return which Philip made to her ardent attachment, and the resolution which he had formed of settling in Spain, and abandoning her for ever, all preyed on her mind, and hastened her decay. Yet though, in this state of things, Cecil had every inducement to cultivate the favour of Elizabeth, it was only by incurring the most imminent danger, that, surrounded as she was by the spies of Mary, any communication could be held with her. By uniting, however, dexterity and circumspection with a cool intrepidity, he found means to open and maintain a private correspondence; and often conveyed to her such intelligence as enabled her to avoid the snares of her suspicious and vindictive sister.

The interval of leisure, which he at present enjoyed, he seems to have diligently spent in digesting plans for that order of things which he anticipated in the new reign; and so well had he matured his ideas, that he was enabled to present Elizabeth, on the very day of her accession, with a memorial, pointing out those affairs

which required instant despatch. Mindful of the favours which she had received in her adversity, and gratified to find a counsellor already prepared to give activity to her government, Elizabeth hastened to reward and secure his services. He was the first person sworn of her privy council, and was at the same time created secretary of state.*

From this time forward, Cecil may be considered as the first minister of Elizabeth, and the principal adviser of her measures. As he knew that on her life depended both his prospects and his safety, since Mary queen of Scots, the next heir, was a catholic, entirely directed by her bigoted relatives of the house of Guise, his attachment was sincere, and his exertions zealous. Elizabeth, possessed of penetration to perceive, and judgment to appreciate, his talents, rested with peculiar confidence on his fidelity and tried abilities. Her passions, her prejudices, her caprice, made her frequently act in opposition to his sentiments, but none of her ministers or favourites was so generally consulted; and his cool, deliberate, weighty reasonings, often obtained, from her better judgment, concessions to which her inclinations were extremely averse. As it would be tedious to follow the labours of Cecil in an administration of forty years, we must now relinquish the narrative form, and attempt an outline of his policy, under a few general heads, taking as our text the grand questions which engaged the solicitude of the queen and her minister in that age of dissension and danger. This will lead us to examine his policy in regard to religion; his civil policy or administration of home affairs; his foreign policy, — towards the Low Countries, Spain, France, Scotland, and Mary queen of Scots.

The measures relative to religion were those which most incessantly harassed him during his administration, and which required the greatest caution and management, because his sentiments corresponded ill with the inclinations of his sovereign. At the commencement

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 13.

of the reign of Edward VI., the more gross absurdities of the Romish church, which his father had forcibly retained, were abolished; and a more rational worship, both in substance and form, established by law. Yet although many further changes were made in the course of this reign, by archbishop Cranmer and the other heads of the church, the reformation was still considered incomplete. King Edward, in his diary, laments that he was prevented, by the opposition of the prejudiced, from restoring the primitive discipline according to his heart's desire; and in the preface to one of the service-books, published by authority, the framers observed, "that they had gone as far as they could in reforming the church, considering the times they lived in, and hoped that they who came after them would, as they might, do more."* The lamented death of Edward put a period, for the time, to the hopes of further improvement. Mary was no sooner seated on the throne, than she restored the faith and forms of the catholic church, acknowledged the supremacy of the pope, reconciled her dominions to the see of Rome, and began, by the most cruel exertions of her authority, to replunge the people into that superstition and ignorance from which they had just emerged. It was to the accession of Elizabeth, who was known to be attached to the reformed religion, that the protestants now looked forward as the period of their deliverance and triumph; and, Cecil, aware that no object could be more important than to quiet the minds of men in this concern, had urged it upon that princess as the first of her cares.

But the views of the queen and her minister, with regard to the extent of the projected reformation, were far from coinciding. Cecil had learnt, from recent events both in his own and in foreign countries, how many dangers and convulsions might be avoided in religious changes, if government wisely took the lead. He had also observed the channel towards which the current of public opinion was strongly directed. The great major-

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. i. p. 73. edit. 1793.

ity of the nation had seconded Edward and his council in their successive measures in favour of the reformed worship, and looked forward to further changes, when the successor of that prince unfortunately attempted to tear up his work from the foundation. But the extravagant cruelties of Mary, although they intimidated many into an apparent submission, aggravated the general detestation of the popish religion. The people, exasperated to behold their countrymen groaning under the torture, or expiring in the flames, now looked with horror, not only on the tenets, but on the rites, the ceremonies, the appendages, of a sanguinary church. Many Englishmen who had sought refuge in exile, having observed the tranquil and flourishing condition of states which had entirely renounced both the tenets and rites of the Romish church, hastened, on the accession of Elizabeth, to apprise their countrymen of those happy effects, and incite them to similar changes. To this state of public sentiment Cecil might be desirous to accommodate the ecclesiastical establishment of England. The favourite, and confidential adviser of Edward, he seems to have deeply imbibed the reforming spirit of that reign; and we find him acting as one of the commissioners who prepared a purer code of canon laws, which the death of the young monarch prevented from receiving the royal sanction.

But for a thorough reformation the mind of Elizabeth was by no means prepared. The superstitious tenets which her father thought proper to retain had partly insinuated themselves into her belief; while her imagination had become still more impressed with the mysterious ceremonies and splendid array of the catholic worship. She was therefore inclined to draw from the more advanced measures of her brother's reign, and would have been content with a very few changes in doctrine and form. Yet Cecil had very powerful arguments to induce her concurrence with his plans. He could represent that the voice of the nation was loudly in favour of the reformation: that the ill success of her sister, and the

odium which she had incurred, proved the danger of attempting to maintain the worship of Rome: that the protestants, both at home and abroad, looked up to her as their only hope, and would prove the firmest supporters of her government: that the catholics, on the other hand, acknowledged Mary queen of Scots as the legitimate heiress of the throne, and were ready to make the most dangerous attempts in support of her title: that the more completely the minds of her subjects became alienated from the doctrines and rites of the Roman church, the more decidedly they would be united against the claims of her rival: and that it was impossible to be reconciled to Rome without giving up that supremacy in religious matters which her father had accounted among his proudest titles.*

By such considerations Cecil obtained the consent of Elizabeth to the restoration of the protestent worship; but the plan which he first laid before the privy council, and afterwards before parliament, for the new establishment, did not, in its provisions, go beyond that which had been adopted at the commencement of Edward VI.'s reign.† Yet even to the moderate retrenchments thus made in the catholic worship, the queen was with

* When we look into the arguments which Camden and Burnet have, on this occasion, put into the mouth of Cecil, we shall perceive that these historians have framed his discourse rather from his known principles and the circumstances of the times, than from any real documents. Yet it must be acknowledged, that the discourses which they attribute to him possess a verisimilitude that does not pass the licence usually permitted to historians. But Mr. Hume, although he expressly refers to these writers as his authorities, not only new-models and varies their account, but even makes Cecil speak like a fellow sceptic of the eighteenth century. According to him, the minister assures his sovereign that she may safely venture on any reformation she chooses, for "the nation had of late been so much accustomed to these revolutions, that men had lost all idea of truth and falsehood on such subjects." This representation, of which no trace is to be found in Camden or Burnet, is the more objectionable, that it is inconsistent, not only with verisimilitude, but with fact. That Cecil, so distinguished as a zealous protestant, should have spoken thus lightly of religious tenets, is as incredible as that Elizabeth, who, on several occasions, was ready to sacrifice her interests to her bigotry, should listen to such a discourse: and still more absurd is it to suppose that a minister so sagacious, and a princess so penetrating, should have so egregiously mistaken the state of men's minds, as to believe them wholly indifferent to those very changes to which so many had signalised their attachment at the stake, and *all* the bishops affirmed their aversion by a resignation of their benefices. The ferment of religious opinions was, perhaps, never greater than at that very period.

† Bacon's Works, vol. iv. p. 374. edit. 1740.

difficulty reconciled; and she went so far as to declare that she would not have passed the act for these changes, had it not contained one saving clause which entitled her "to ordain and publish such further ceremonies and rules as may be for the advancement of God's glory, and edifying his church, and the reverence of Christ's holy mysteries and sacraments."*

But although Cecil exerted himself strenuously to procure reformation in the church, his cool and temperate mind was little moved by religious animosities, and was willing to tolerate the catholics, provided they engaged in no dangerous attempts against the state. The maxims on which Elizabeth and her ministers professed to found their conduct in matters of religion were, first, "that consciences are not to be forced, but to be won and reduced by the force of truth, by the aid of time, and the use of all good means of instruction and persuasion;" and, secondly, "that causes of conscience, when they exceed their bounds, and prove to be matter of faction, lose their nature; and that sovereign princes ought distinctly to punish the practice or contempt, though coloured with the pretences of conscience and religion."† The first of these maxims corresponded entirely with the moderation of Cecil; and the second, although very capable of interpretations, according to the mildness or violence of the expounders, was, in his hands, a sufficiently safe principle. While the catholics, enraged at the sagacity with which he detected, and the vigour with which he counteracted, all their enterprises, charged him loudly with cruelty towards them, they still were unable to produce any instance in which his severity exceeded what the immediate security of government appeared to demand.‡

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. i. p. 130.

† Bacon's Works, vol. iv. p. 360. Also Knollys's Letter to Cretoy, in Burnet's History of the Reformation.

‡ Bacon, vol. iv. p. 361, 362. In a letter, in which he replies to some applications to mitigate his rigours against the papists, Burleigh affirms that these rigours were exaggerated; that they amounted only to very gentle penalties, and were employed solely against the known and active enemies of government. "In very truth," says he, "whereof I know not to the contrary, there is no catholic persecuted to the danger of life here, but such

The queen still gave strong indications of an attachment to the forms of the old religion. Although prevailed on to command the more obnoxious monuments of idolatry to be removed from the churches; yet the service in her own chapel was still attended with such ceremonies and splendour, that foreigners could distinguish it from the Roman only by its being performed in English. Here the choristers appeared in their surplices, and the priests in their copes: the altar, in the midst of which stood a massy crucifix of silver, was furnished with rich plate, and two gilt candlesticks with lighted candles: the service on solemn festivals was sung not only with the sound of organs, but of cornets, sackbuts, and other musical instruments: and, that nothing might be wanting to its ancient solemnity, the ceremonies observed by the knights of the garter in their adoration towards the altar, which had been abolished by king Edward, and revived by queen Mary, were now retained.* As Elizabeth advanced in years, these propensities seem gradually to have increased; for, though she was obliged to guard against the catholics as her inveterate enemies, though she had been excommunicated by the pope, and lived in perpetual danger from the plots, insurrections, and invasions of his partisans, yet Cecil found considerable difficulty in dissuading her from bringing the state of the church nearer the old religion. It was only by a firm and spirited interposition that he could prevent her from absolutely prohibiting the marriage of the clergy; and she is said to have often repented that she had gone so far in her concessions.† When the dean of St. Paul's, in a sermon preached before her, had spoken with some disapprobation of the sign of the cross, she called aloud to him from her closet, to desist from that ungodly digression, and return to his

as profess themselves, by obedience to the pope, to be no subjects to the queen. And although their outward pretence be, to be sent from the seminaries to convert people to their religion, yet, without reconciling of them from their obedience to the queen, they never give them absolution. Such in our realm as refuse to come to our churches, and yet do not discover their obedience to the queen, be taxed with fines, according to the law, without danger of their lives."—*Birch's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 94.

* Neal, vol. i. p. 144. † Ibid. p 158.

text. On another occasion, when one of her chaplains had preached a sermon in defence of the real presence, which he would scarcely have ventured to do had not her sentiments been well understood, she openly gave him thanks for his pains and piety.* The protestants, strongly united as they were to her by every tie of interest, could not, without some murmurs and indignation, observe her predilection for the rites of their opponents.

But while Cecil found Elizabeth ready to show the catholics every indulgence which the public safety could admit, all his influence and entreaties were insufficient to procure a similar lenity for another class of her subjects. A considerable portion of the people eagerly desired a more thorough reformation than had been accomplished under king Edward; and the protestants soon became divided into those who conformed and those who would not conform to the institutions of Elizabeth. Yet, since the nonconformists, or puritans (for so they were now called from affecting a superior purity in worship and morals), differed from the adherents of the church in no point of faith, but merely in certain external forms, a few concessions on either side might have prevented the disunion. But this was not the age of mutual forbearance, and the party of the established church were ill prepared for limitations to the interference of government. They did not see that, while it was the duty of government to provide a competent number of well qualified religious teachers, and to draw up regulations for their direction in respect both to the substance and the mode of their instructions, it was equally its duty to go no further, and to beware of turning their proposed benefits into oppression, by forcing obnoxious opinions and forms on the public. Elizabeth, holding very different sentiments from these, not only prescribed peculiar forms for the religious worship of her people, but was determined that they should use no other. To these the puritans objected, because they had been previously employed in the popish worship as mystical

* Warner's Ecclesiast. Hist. vol. ii. p. 427.

symbols, and were associated in the minds of the people with the grossest superstition. No worldly consideration would induce them to assume what they accounted appendages of idolatry; while the queen, on her part, prepared to employ all her authority in support of the prescribed forms.

Finding that her council, the ablest and wisest council that England ever saw, were decidedly averse to measures which threatened to involve the nation in dangerous dissensions, she resolved to effect her purpose by means of some of the bishops, particularly archbishop Parker, who readily and zealously entered into her views.* The severities to which these men now proceeded were only surpassed by the frivolity of their ostensible cause. A fervent attachment to the use of surplices, corner-caps, tippets, the cross in baptism, and the ring in marriage, were, in their eyes, the distinguishing characteristics of a Christian; and any dislike to these forms was accounted a sufficient crime to subject the most learned and pious clergyman to imprisonment and exile; or, as a mitigated punishment, to be turned out of his living, and consigned with his family to indigence. The most pernicious effects necessarily flowed from these severities: while the church was weakened by the loss of many able divines, and degraded by the introduction of men who could barely read the prayer-book and write their own names, the people began every where to collect around their expelled teachers, and to form conventicles apart from the establishment. Yet these mischievous consequences only set the queen and her bishops on framing new statutes to reach the refractory; and at length even the laity were brought within their grasp, by an act which provided that non-attendance at public worship in the parish churches should be punished with imprisonment, banishment, and, if the exile returned, with death. An arbitrary commission was appointed with full powers to bring all religious offenders to punishment; and as any resistance to the injunctions of the queen, as

* Neal, vol. i. p. 192.

supreme head of the church, was at length construed into sedition and treason, many subjects of unquestioned loyalty were imprisoned, banished, and brought to ruin.

Nothing could exceed the imperious demeanour which some of the prelates, confident of royal support, now assumed. Archbishop Parker having, from a wish to display his authority, commanded one of his suffragans to suppress certain meetings which the clergy of the same neighbourhood were accustomed to hold for their mutual improvement, the privy council, who looked on these exercises as extremely beneficial, since they greatly contributed to diffuse knowledge at a period when the clergy in general were ill instructed, countermanded this injunction of the primate, and ordered that these meetings should receive every encouragement. The prelate, however, having represented to the queen the danger to which her supremacy would be exposed, if he, her vicegerent, should thus be counteracted, readily procured her direct interference in support of his authority; and the council had the mortification to find the *exercises*, as they were called, suppressed not only in one diocese, but throughout the kingdom.* At one time, we find the whole council soliciting the haughty primate in vain, in behalf of clergymen distinguished for learning and piety, whom he had, on some frivolous pretext, expelled from their benefices †; at another, we find them, with as little effect, threatening him with the penalties of the law, which he had greatly exceeded in his severities.‡ At last, archbishop Parker rendered himself so obnoxious, that the queen found it prudent to allay the popular clamour by stopping short his career; but this produced very little alteration in the mind of Elizabeth; for when his successor, the moderate Grindal, refused to enforce some of her injunctions, she did not hesitate, by an extraordinary exertion of her supremacy, to suspend him from his functions, and meditated even to deprive him altogether.

* Life of Parker, p. 461. † Neal, vol. i. p. 373.
‡ Letter of the Lords of Council, ibid. p. 383.

Whitgift, the succeeding primate, taught by this example, proceeded to severities which Parker would not have ventured to exercise, nor the queen, in the earlier part of her reign, have countenanced.

The efforts of Cecil, in an individual capacity, were equally unavailing in these days of intolerance. At first, his high office and known influence with the queen overawed the more violent prelates, and he was enabled to deliver several persons from their resentment. But when it became known that the prejudices of her majesty were too powerful to be counteracted by the united voice of her council, his remonstrances, his threats, his entreaties, in favour of the oppressed nonconformists, were treated with equal neglect. The university of Cambridge, of which he was chancellor, had, much to their honour, made a bold and manly stand in support of freedom of opinion, and he had succeeded in maintaining their privileges against the attempts of several of the bishops *; but when that learned body ventured to declare openly against corner-caps and surplices, the indignation of these prelates and the queen became so implacable, that he was obliged to abandon them to the rigorous injunctions of their adversaries.† Even after he had attained the highest office in the state, his solicitations in behalf of persecuted individuals, in whom he was interested, were without effect ‡; and his own domestic chaplain, supported by the benchers of the Temple, whose lecturer he also was, could not escape the rigour of the government party. §

Cecil, as well as the other ministers, were sometimes put on the ungrateful task of acting as the organs of the queen's mandates against the nonconformists. Perhaps it might have been more manly to have refused this submission, and have renounced his office rather than his independence; but he knew, that, out of office, he could yield no protection whatever to the cause which he favoured; it was his policy to temporise rather than

* Letter of the Lords of Council, Neal, vol. i. p. 195.
† Ibid. 196. ‡ Ibid. 252. 306. 319. 381. &c. § Ibid. 390.

violently resist; and to procure, by temperate and persevering remonstrances, such partial changes in the measures which he disapproved, as would not have been granted to an avowed and resolute opposition. Yet, at times, the impolitic severities of the prelates induced him to assume a tone of censure and authority, in which he never indulged unless his indignation was greatly roused. Archbishop Whitgift having drawn up a long list of captious articles, which the clergy were either to answer to his satisfaction, or to be suspended, and having proceeded, by means of it, to harass those who were obnoxious to him, Cecil attempted to stop his proceedings by the following letter: —

"It may please your grace,

"I am sorry to trouble you so oft as I do, but I am more troubled myself, not only with many private petitions of sundry ministers, recommended for persons of credit, and peaceable in their ministry, who are greatly troubled by your grace and your colleagues in commission; but I am also daily charged by counsellors and public persons, with neglect of my duty, in not staying your grace's vehement proceedings against ministers, whereby papists are greatly encouraged, and the queen's safety endangered. I have read over your twenty-four articles, found in a Romish style, of great length and curiosity, to examine all manner of ministers in this time, without distinction of persons, to be executed *ex officio mero*. And I find them so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, that I think *the inquisition of Spain used not so many questions to comprehend and to trap their priests*. I know you canonists can defend these with all their particles; but surely, under correction, this judicial and canonical sifting poor ministers is not to edify or reform. And, in charity, I think they ought not to answer all these nice points, except they were notorious papists or heretics. I write with the testimony of a good conscience. I desire the peace and unity of the church. I favour no sensual

and wilful recusant; but I conclude, according to my simple judgment, *this kind of proceeding is too much savouring of the Romish inquisition, and is a decree rather to seek for offenders than to reform any.* It is not charitable to send poor ministers to your common register, to answer upon so many articles at one instant, without a copy of the articles or their answers. I pray your grace bear with this one (perchance) fault, that I have willed the ministers not to answer these articles except their consciences may suffer them."

To this spirited letter the archbishop returned an elaborate reply, in which he defended his proceedings; and Cecil, perceiving that it was in vain to remonstrate, only replied, "that, after reading his grace's long answer, he was not satisfied in the point of seeking, by examination, to have ministers accuse themselves, and then punish them for their own confessions; that he would not call his proceedings captious, but they were scarcely charitable." Whitgift rejoined, by sending him other papers in his own justification, and endeavoured to convince him, that if archbishops and bishops should be driven to use proofs *by witnesses only,* the execution of the law would be partial, their charges in procuring and producing witnesses intolerable, and their proceedings altogether too slow and circumscribed for extinguishing the sectaries.*

Cecil was by no means satisfied with these reasonings of the prelate, and therefore united with the rest of the council in sending him a still stronger remonstrance, in which they complained that the most diligent, learned, and zealous pastors, were deprived of their livings for a few points respecting unimportant ceremonies; while the most ignorant and notoriously profligate characters were allowed to retain their cures unmolested, provided they submitted their consciences without reserve to their superiors. That the primate might not plead ignorance of the alleged abuses, the council sent with this letter a

* Strype's Life of Whitgift, p. 160.

list of names, in three columns, — one of learned and worthy ministers deprived, a second of ignorant and vicious persons continued, and a third of pluralists and non-residents. But these remonstrances, as they were not enforced by the arm of power, served only to exasperate the archbishop; and the same violent measures continued to be pursued with unremitting activity.

The ministers of Elizabeth, besides their unwillingness to occasion internal dissensions, seem to have feared that the exorbitant power entrusted to the superior clergy, for enforcing their forms, might give the protestants the undue ascendancy possessed by the church of Rome. Sir Francis Knollys, one of the ministers, in a letter to his colleague Cecil, calls some of Whitgift's ordinances *articles of inquisition, highly prejudicial to the royal prerogative.** And, indeed, there seemed to be reasonable grounds for alarm; since some of the clergy began, after the example of the church of Rome, to give hints of a divine right, which, by a wonderful concatenation, had been transmitted to them from the very days of the apostles.† On the other hand, it was easy to foresee that the puritans, pushed to extremities, would begin to question that power from which their hardships proceeded; and, becoming more exasperated against the church, would begin to associate with their earnest desire for ecclesiastical reformation an expectation of changes in the government which supported it. But the peculiar circumstances of the times prevented these dispositions, however evident, from leading, during Elizabeth's reign, to any dangerous consequences. The puritans, as well as all other protestants, fondly looked on her as their refuge against the intolerable cruelty of the catholics; and, even when they felt themselves to be the objects of her aversion, they, as well as their brethren in Scotland, en-

* Neal, vol. i. p. 444.

† These ideas were now promulgated by Bancroft; but Cranmer had so fully considered himself as an officer acting by the king's authority, and was so well convinced that his episcopal power ended, like that of the other officers, with the life of the monarch who conferred it, that, on the death of Henry VIII. he refused to exercise any jurisdiction, until he received a new commission from king Edward.

tered into associations for the defence of her person and government.

In civil transactions, the moderate and cautious maxims of Cecil had a far more conspicuous ascendant. Considering as the happiest condition of a nation a state of unbroken peace, in which the people might proceed in the improvement of their circumstances by contented industry, he was the strenuous advocate of every moderate and conciliatory measure. Meriting, above almost all statesmen, the character of a safe politician, his principles of government were salutary at all times, but peculiarly fortunate in the dangerous and delicate period when he lived.

From the commencement of his administration under Elizabeth, he proceeded, as he had done during the short reign of Edward, in a gradual amelioration of the internal state of the country. One of his first measures was to reinstate the coin of the realm, which had been so much debased during the preceding reigns as to prove extremely prejudicial to trade, both at home and abroad. While the shilling, which, in the first years of Henry VIII., contained 118 grains of fine silver, was, in the latter part of his reign, reduced to forty, and, in the reign of Edward, to twenty; the money price of every thing was, by this means, both exorbitantly increased, and rendered extremely uncertain.* In transactions with foreign merchants, and even among the natives themselves, the difference between the real and nominal value of the coin was a source of endless disputes; and the popular discontents which ensued were both loud and general. Some attempts had been made to remedy the evil; but proving abortive, from the scarcity of bullion, and the want of perseverance on the part of government, the prospect of amendment was now deemed almost hopeless. Cecil, however, was strongly impressed with the great advantages which would result from a restoration of the coin; and having been convinced, from a mature consideration which he had given

* Lowndes's Extract from the Mint, in Locke's Essay on Coin, p. 69.

to the subject, even in the reign of Edward, that the preceding failures were the result of mismanagement, he prevailed on Elizabeth to commence the undertaking without delay, and gradually, but resolutely, to proceed as her means would allow. To render the people more eager to bring the base money into the mint, its current value was reduced by proclamation; and new gold and silver coin, of the standard weight and value, being issued in exchange, the money of England, from an excessive debasement, soon became the heaviest and finest in Europe.

But the measures which the state of public affairs obliged him to pursue were not always so evidently beneficial, or so generally acceptable. Aware, however, that the nation, if convinced that the plans of government were for their advantage, would concur in them far more certainly than from a dread of authority, he was anxious to secure the public opinion, and procure obedience rather by persuasion than command. He advised Elizabeth, as the first act of her reign, to summon a parliament. Here he introduced his proposition for religious reformation, and called on the catholics to reply freely to the arguments which he advanced. In the succeeding period of the reign, however, the bold doctrines of the puritans, and the queen's exceeding aversion to any discussion which might touch her prerogative, prevented him from employing this channel for the defence of his measures; yet he seems occasionally to have adopted the practice of bringing political transactions before parliament. There is still preserved a very clear exposition of the designs of Philip II. of Spain, which he delivered on one occasion in the house of lords, and the heads of which he afterwards transmitted to the speaker, for the information of the commons.*

In the press he found a more constant and effectual method of influencing public opinion. As he never undertook any political measure without due deliberation, he concluded that the same reasons which weighed with

* Strype's Annals, vol. iv. p. 107.

him would weigh with the nation at large. Though involved in a vast maze of public business, he did not fail to bestow a portion of his time in justifying to the world both the measures of his government, and his own private conduct. Among the salutary effects of his political writings, it is mentioned that they contributed much to retain the people in their allegiance during the dangerous insurrections which succeeded Norfolk's first conspiracy. There are still extant several of his pieces on that occasion, in which he paints the folly and danger of the rebels, the profligate characters of their ringleaders, and the miseries which must inevitably overtake them in the event of defeat.* To the many defamatory libels which the jesuits published, during his administration, against Elizabeth and her ministers, it was his constant practice to publish replies. He knew too well the impression made by uncontradicted calumnies, to let them pass unexposed. Silent contempt, he perceived, might be represented as proceeding from conscious guilt; and to suppress the propagation of slanders by force, would seem to betray both an inability to refute them, and a dread of their effects. He knew that better arguments could always be found in support of truth than of falsehood, and that it was the fault of the reasoner if the cause of right did not appear to the greatest advantage. The great facility of composition, which he had acquired in the earlier period of his life, proved of infinite importance to him in these voluminous apologies.†

To diffuse information among the people, and render them capable of comprehending sound reasoning on public business, was a favourite object with Cecil. In contradiction to the absurd idea, that ignorance is the parent of good order, that men will prove the best subjects when they bestow no thought on their social relations, it was the maxim of this sagacious statesman, "that where the people were well taught, the king had

* See Camden, Strype, &c.

† Many of them are published in Strype, and many still remain in manuscript.

ever good obedience of his subjects."* Considering the church as the grand channel for the moral as well as religious instruction of the people, he earnestly laboured to fill every ecclesiastical office with able, learned, and active teachers. To impress these sentiments on his sovereign, as well as his political colleagues, he warned them that "where there wanted a good ministry, there were ever bad people; for they that knew not how to serve God would never obey the king."†

Fortunate had it been for the fame of Cecil, if his accommodating policy, his desire to gratify the queen without incensing the people, could always have been carried into effect by means equally praiseworthy. But Elizabeth's passion for uncontrolled power sometimes led him into measures, or at least into schemes, which would seem to indicate that his regard to public opinion arose rather from the love of tranquillity, than from concern for the liberties of the nation. Of this description were some plans which he proposed for augmenting the royal revenue, without having recourse to parliament. To this last resource Elizabeth had a peculiar aversion; and, rather than endure the disquisitions and remonstrances from which the commons could now with much difficulty be restrained, she was willing to relieve her pressing exigencies by alienating the crown lands, and entailing irremediable embarrassment on her successors. Cecil seems to have been desirous to avert these ruinous alienations, and yet anxious to gratify the queen by procuring supplies independent of the parliament. One scheme for this purpose, which he proposed in a speech to Elizabeth and her council, was to erect a court for the correction of all abuses, invested with a general inquisitorial authority over the whole kingdom, and empowered to punish defaults by fines for the royal exchequer. He urges the queen to the adoption of this measure by the example of her grandfather, Henry VII., who by such means greatly augmented his revenue; and recommends that the court, to render its operations more

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 55. † Ibid.

effectual, should proceed "as well by the direction and ordinary course of the laws, as by the virtue of her majesty's supreme regiment and absolute power, from whence law proceeded." From this institution he expected a greater revenue than Henry VIII. derived from the abolition of the abbeys, and all the forfeitures of ecclesiastical revenues.* Strange! that a minister who, on other occasions, so wisely regarded the popular feeling, should propose a scheme which must have revived the odious extortions of Empson and Dudley. Refined speculations on the motives of men are almost always false, or we might be induced to suppose that Cecil, on this occasion, was desirous to turn the attention of the queen from more practicable methods of procuring illegal supplies, by directing it to schemes which could never be executed.

Another financial suggestion of his was entitled to approbation, if we make due allowance for the abuses and ignorance of the age. Although it was the acknowledged prerogative of the commons that no tax should be levied on the people without their consent, yet the kings of England had found various means to elude this right. Of these, one of the most successful was to levy money under the name of a benevolence, or voluntary loan, which, however, scarcely differed in any thing from a tax. Its amount was regulated by the government, and those from whom it was demanded were obliged to comply: the lenders received no interest while it remained in the hands of the public; and the principal, if ever returned, was usually detained till a very distant period.† Yet such was the effect of a name, that people acquiesced patiently in this abuse; and the same com-

* Strype, Annal. vol. iv. p. 334.

† The methods practised in levying these forced voluntary loans are developed in a curious paper of instructions from the council of Henry VIII. to the commissioners for the county of Derby, inserted in Lodge's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 71. The commissioners are here enjoined to employ every art that may work upon the hopes or fears of the person applied to; and if, after all, he obstinately refuses to comply, they are then ordered to swear him to secresy in regard to what has passed, that his example may not influence others. But, occasionally, much more severe measures were resorted to against the refractory; and from a document in the same collection (vol. i. p. 82.), we find Richard Reed, an alderman of London, who refused to contribute, forcibly carried off, by the king's order, to serve as a common soldier!

mons, who would have taken fire at an attempt to levy a subsidy by the monarch's sole authority, were brought to countenance his no less oppressive borrowing. As the benevolences were imposed at the discretion of the officers of government, who had also a power to accept what they chose to account a reasonable excuse, they were levied in the most partial and injurious manner. Some individuals were reduced to ruin by these exactions; while others, of equal property, were allowed to escape them altogether. Cecil, to render this practice less unfair in itself, and less severe on individuals, hazarded a proposition to raise a general loan on the people, equivalent in amount to a subsidy, and imposed according to the same proportions.*

It was with a more successful issue, and much happier example, that he strenuously recommended a rigid frugality as the only effectual means of carrying on the government, without compromising its authority, or engendering public discontents. Elizabeth had the prudence to coincide with these economical views; and she has hence deservedly acquired the reputation of husbanding her resources with the utmost skill, and making very few demands on the property of her people. Although surrounded by powerful enemies, engaged in frequent wars, obliged to disburse large sums for the support of her friends abroad, and the suppression of dangerous enterprises at home, she conducted her government at less expense, in proportion to her undertakings, than any sovereign in our history. The large debts contracted by her father and sister, with which she found the crown encumbered at her accession, amounted, it is said, to four millions,—an enormous sum in that age†: yet these she quickly discharged, and, at her death, could rank her most potent allies among her debtors. The states of Holland owed her 800,000*l.*, and the king of France 450,000*l.*‡

From this strict economy, of which Cecil never lost

* Haynes, p. 519. † D'Ewes, p. 473.
‡ Winwood, vol. i. p. 29. 54.

sight, there resulted the most important advantages. As the people were not harassed with exactions, the government of Elizabeth was extremely popular, at a period when the dangerous machinations of her enemies, both at home and abroad, rendered popularity indispensable to her safety. Without illegal extortions, or contests with her parliament, she was enabled to maintain her independence, and to avoid concessions to which her haughty spirit could not submit. She was even able occasionally to acquire the praise of disinterestedness and generosity, by refusing the grants of money which were offered to her by the legislature without solicitation. By this management she so completely acquired the confidence of her subjects, that the commons, though in these days extremely tenacious of their money, voted her, without reluctance, and without annexing any conditions, much larger sums than had been granted to her predecessors. They knew that their treasures were never misapplied; that nothing was expended which could possibly be saved; and the unavoidable exigencies of the state were always acknowledged by the nation before the government had recourse to parliament for supplies. When we consider the temper and conduct of Elizabeth, we cannot but attribute the tranquillity of her reign, in a great measure, to this rigid frugality. Scarcely less haughty and impatient of contradiction than her father, her pretensions to absolute authority were at times even more lofty, and her usual language to her parliaments still less gracious. As the commons, however compliant in other respects, were ever ready to encounter danger, rather than surrender the public money without evident utility, or a valuable consideration, it can scarcely be doubted, that, if she had been led into embarrassments by prodigality, their resolute demands for concessions on the one hand, and her obstinate refusal to abridge her power on the other, would have terminated in civil convulsions.

In the intercourse of England with foreign nations, this economy in the management of public money was replete with equal advantage. The allies, whom it was

most essential for Elizabeth to support, were often reduced to such straits for money, that the dispersion of their forces, and the utter ruin of their hopes, seemed inevitable. In these critical emergencies, she found means, either from her exchequer or her credit, to afford them a supply; and its seasonableness gave it an efficacy beyond its magnitude. But though she relieved them opportunely, she wasted none of her resources without the most evident necessity. Her policy was never to afford them any supplies of men and money, until she found that they could not otherwise defend themselves; to send them at length succours just sufficient to retrieve their circumstances; and to withdraw her forces as soon as the most imminent danger was repelled. She was liberal only when her allies were much depressed, and it was necessary to revive their drooping spirits; at other times, she required that the money which she advanced should be repaid, and even that the expenses of her armaments should be reimbursed. Most of her pecuniary assistance to Henry IV. of France was given in the form of loans; and the Dutch were obliged to put into her hands several fortified towns as security for the repayment of her advances. She thus enabled her allies to retrieve their affairs, and provided that the expenditure, of which they were to reap the chief benefit, should not become a burden to her subjects.

The frugality of Elizabeth did not escape censure; and Cecil, by whose counsels it was known to be enforced, was often reproached with sacrificing the best allies of England to his little-minded and parsimonious policy. But events fully justified his sagacity. While our allies were raised to the most vigorous exertion, and finally triumphed over their enemies, England herself, the main spring of these efforts, advanced in a progressive course of prosperity.

But it was the very sparing hand with which he distributed the public money at home that excited against him the loudest clamours. In those days it was customary for men of rank to waste their property in at-

tendance at court, and in an idle emulation of splendour, while they looked to the bounty of the sovereign for repairing their ruined fortunes. To the importunities of this train, who perpetually beset the court, and yet could urge no other claim than their own profusion, Cecil was inexorable. They complained that he not only refused to exert his interest in their behalf, but even hardened the queen against their solicitations.* Elizabeth, indeed, had no inclination to be prodigal of her treasures, unless when her individual predilections occasionally overcame her general parsimony. Her partial regard to the earl of Essex seems particularly to have moved her liberality; for we find, that, on his departure for the government of Ireland, she made him a present of 30,000*l.*†; and Cecil, who watched these instances of profusion with a jealous eye, computed that, from first to last, her pecuniary gifts to the earl amounted to 300,000*l.*‡;—a lavish bounty, while the annual ordinary revenues of the state did not exceed 500,000*l.*

Elizabeth, anxious to avoid dependence on her parliament, was too often persuaded to reward her courtiers with grants prejudicial to the national prosperity. Sometimes she yielded them exemptions from the penalties of the laws; sometimes she indulged them in the suppression of prosecutions; and still more frequently, she enriched them by monopolies of articles in general use. Against these abuses, which he justly termed the cankers of the commonwealth §, Cecil continually remonstrated, but too often in vain. Towards the latter end of the reign, however, the evil became so enormous as to compel a remedy; for the commons, perceiving the commerce of the nation hastening to ruin under the pressure of monopolies, became so vehement in their complaints, that Elizabeth felt the necessity of abolishing the most obnoxious.

* "Madam," he was accustomed to say, "you do well to let suitors stay, for I shall tell you *bis dat qui cito dat*; if you grant them speedily, they will come again the sooner."—*Bacon's Works*, vol. iii. p. 264.

† Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. ‡ Nanton's Regalia, chap. i.

§ Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 52.

But while Cecil was the avowed enemy of all grants to idle suitors, he anxiously desired that those who performed real services should enjoy a liberal provision. It was by his salutary regulations that the common soldiers were first clothed at the expense of government, and received their weekly allowance directly into their own hands.* According to the previous practice, the whole pay of the corps was consigned into the hands of the superior officers, who were so little restricted, either as to the time or the amount of their distributions, that the unfortunate soldiers were sometimes absolutely left to starve. The reformation of these abuses occasioned many murmurs among those whom it deprived of their unjust gains; but it infused new loyalty and vigour into the English army, at a period when foreign invasion, assisted by many internal enemies, threatened to involve the country in ruin. From a general adherence to this system, of being liberal to the servants of the public, and very parsimonious to the dependents of the court, it became a common saying, that "the queen paid liberally, though she rewarded sparingly."

Cecil was raised to the office of lord high treasurer in the eleventh year of his administration. In this high station, while he punished with severity all oppression in the collection of the revenue, he gave strict orders that no one should be allowed to escape from his just proportion of the public taxes. All undue lenity of this sort to one individual, he considered a direct injustice to another; since the deficiency must have been made up by new exactions on the more honourable contributors. From this strict impartiality, and from his improved arrangements, the receipts of the treasury, from the same sources, experienced a great amelioration. The abuse, which then prevailed, of ministers retaining in their hands, and receiving interest on, considerable sums of the public money, he endeavoured to check by never issuing the smallest payment without an express warrant from the queen. Of the purity which he required in

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 47.

others, he himself set an example; for he never imitated the usual practice of other treasurers, in occasionally borrowing from the exchequer for private purposes; and he was almost the only one of Elizabeth's ministers who, at his death, owed nothing to the public. This strict attention to the interests of the exchequer is the more commendable, as it proceeded from a desire to diminish the burdens of the people. So averse was he to all new impositions on the subjects, that he would never allow the tenants of the crown lands to be harassed by a rise of rents, or turned out to make room for higher bidders; and it was his excellent saying, "that he never cared to see the treasury swell like a disordered spleen, when the other parts of the constitution were in a consumption." *

From the same considerations with his love of economy arose his steady attachment to pacific measures. Instructed both by history and by observation, that war was the great means of wasting the resources of nations, he firmly resisted the efforts of those rash and ambitious spirits, who perpetually endeavoured to plunge the nation into hostilities, with the view of advancing their own reputation and fortunes. He had ever on his lips the salutary maxims, "that war is soon kindled, but peace very hardly procured; that war is the curse, and peace the blessing of God upon a nation; and that a realm gains more by one year's peace than by ten years' war." † By these pacific counsels, the queen, from the soundness of her understanding, and her aversion to expense, was usually swayed. On a few occasions, a longing for military glory, or a leaning to some favourite counsellors, who were men of more ambition than discretion, caused her to disregard the dissuasions of Cecil; but more serious reflection seldom failed to dispel her illusion.

The wisdom of Cecil, in adhering resolutely to a pacific system, deserves the more applause, as the con-

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 53.
† Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 70.

dition of Europe at that period was calculated to tempt an English minister into extensive wars. While Scotland and France were torn by intestine convulsions, and the rebels often enabled to overpower the sovereign, the Low Countries, which had revolted against Philip, seemed determined to endure the last extremities rather than again submit to his dominion. England alone enjoyed internal tranquillity; and, by uniting with the insurgents of either country, might have acquired both a large addition of territory, and such other concessions as may be wrested from a weaker power. But Cecil well knew that conquests were not the true road to national aggrandisement; and that his country would suffer more in her resources and real strength, from an extensive and protracted war, than she could gain from its most successful results.

Yet, though the strenuous advocate of a pacific policy, his forbearance did not arise from timidity, nor his parsimony from a contracted mind. Against the dangers which threatened the kingdom, he prepared with firmness and activity; and when the public interests required it, he could advise a large expenditure and extensive armaments. When the prospect of the Spanish invasion filled the nation with just alarm, he drew up plans of defence; and, by his serene and collected demeanour, seconded his courageous mistress in diffusing general confidence and intrepidity.* His conduct with respect to the allies and enemies of his country forms so important a part of his transactions, and exhibits a system of foreign policy so much more extensive and refined than had hitherto been acted upon in England, as to demand a more particular examination.

From the early part of the sixteenth century, the political transactions of Europe had gradually been assuming a more systematic form; and a sort of balance of power was at length established among the principal nations. Henry VIII. boasted of holding this balance; but he held it with so unsteady a hand, and his measures

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. p. 582.

were so much the result of momentary passion, that his influence in foreign transactions was far from adequate to his comparative power. During the reign of Edward VI. England was prevented, by her internal factions, from giving much attention to external affairs; and, by the marriage of Mary with Philip, was sunk for a time into little else than a province of the overgrown Spanish monarchy. But under Elizabeth, various circumstances occurred to alter the aspect of affairs; and England, from the wisdom with which her government availed itself of her advantages, obtained an extraordinary ascendancy in the public transactions of Europe.

Of these circumstances the most important arose from the general change which, at this period, was taking place in religious sentiments. The commencement of the reformation has been noticed in the life of sir Thomas More, and since that time the new principles had spread through almost every country of Europe. The Roman hierarchy attempted to extinguish them by the aid of secular authority; but the reformers, after suffering incredible oppressions, began to defend their freedom of opinion by force of arms. Elizabeth, the greatest sovereign of Europe who had embraced the new faith, was, from her situation, placed at the head of the protestant cause. Exposed thus to the inveterate resentment of the catholics, her protection was relied on by the reformed with the more confidence, as they knew the adherents of the pope to be no less her enemies than their own. The foreign policy of Cecil was adapted to this state of things. He knew that the English catholics, who still formed a powerful body in the nation, were secretly encouraged and urged to dangerous insurrections by the foreign princes of their persuasion. He also knew that these princes were eager to seize an opportunity of uniting their forces to wrest the sceptre from Elizabeth; and that they had already begun to form extensive leagues for that purpose. The most effectual means to avert these dangers was, he concluded, to support the protestants in their opposition to their

catholic sovereigns, who would thus be sufficiently occupied at home, and have neither the leisure nor the power to turn their arms against England.

We are first to consider the application of this plan of policy to the Spanish empire. Philip, at that time the most wealthy and powerful monarch of Europe, was actuated both by inordinate ambition and by a gloomy and unrelenting bigotry. By standing forth as the champion of Rome, and labouring to exterminate the protestants by fire and sword, he expected to acquire such a body of adherents in every country of Europe, as might pave his way to universal dominion. To a prince with such views, Elizabeth, who stood at the head of the protestant interest, was necessarily the most marked object of enmity: yet there were circumstances which induced him, in the first period of her reign, to postpone his hostile schemes, and even to appear as her supporter. At first, he entertained hopes, by gaining her hand, to effect the darling plan, which his union with her sister had failed to realise, of attaching England to the Spanish monarchy. Even after this hope was gone, the marriage of Mary queen of Scots with Francis II., which threatened, if Elizabeth should be overwhelmed by her enemies, to reduce England as well as Scotland under the dominion of France, rendered him desirous to support her against their attempts. But when freed from these apprehensions by the death of Francis, he began to put in practice the enterprises suggested by his schemes of aggrandisement. He still wore the mask of friendship, but he was from that time forward wholly occupied with the extirpation of heresy, and with projects to deprive its great protectress of her throne and her life.

Cecil was, from the first, aware of the real disposition and views of Philip. He perceived that if, by any contingency, the circumstances which rendered a show of friendship towards Elizabeth subservient to that prince's interest should be removed, she would have every thing to dread from his ambition and bigotry. Yet even after

the course of events had rendered this dissimulation unnecessary, and the king of Spain had begun to throw off the mask, the prudent minister of England still advised his mistress to temporise, and, as long as possible, to avoid open hostilities; when her power should be more firmly established, her finances improved, and her forces augmented, then, he showed her, would be the proper period to undertake the contest: in the mean time, it was her policy to dissemble her resentment at the faithlessness of Philip, to meet his advances as if she believed them sincere, and to send an embassy into Spain to settle, by negotiation, any occasional quarrels that might arise.*

These cautious suggestions of Cecil, which the queen had the wisdom to follow, were loudly declaimed against by his political rivals, as resulting from a weak and timid disposition, calculated to compromise the glory of his country, and to degrade its government in the eyes of foreigners. The aids in men, money, and ammunition, which, at the same period, he counselled to be sent to the French protestants, excited reproaches no less importunate, but of an opposite nature; for he, who had just been branded as weak and timid, was now accused of rashness and a disregard to the public safety. Such is the justice of faction!

In pursuance of his ambitious projects, Philip had resolved to deprive his subjects in the Low Countries of their ancient privileges, to bring them completely under the yoke of despotism, and at the same time to extirpate that heresy which, in conjunction with the principles of civil liberty, had already begun to flourish among them. For this purpose he sent thither a body of veteran Spaniards, commanded by the duke of Alva; an experienced officer, but a gloomy bigot, in whose bosom long habits of tyranny seemed to have extinguished every feeling of humanity. His arrival in the Netherlands was marked by the most wanton barbarities. Confiscation, imprisonment, and exile, were accounted mild punishments; few,

* Camden, p. 70.

who had once the misfortune to become objects of suspicion, escaped torture or death; and the victims, whom malice pointed out to the jealous instruments of the tyrant, were often, without any form of accusation or trial, committed to the flames. Such was the barbarity of this man, that, besides the slaughters perpetrated by his soldiers, he boasted, with a savage joy, on leaving the Netherlands, that, during his government there, he had delivered eighteen thousand of these obstinate heretics into the hands of the executioner.*

The unfortunate Flemings quitted their native country in crowds, fled to England, the only state in Europe where they could depend on effectual protection; and Elizabeth, cordially receiving them, was enabled, with their assistance, to enrich her dominions by several valuable manufactures which had hitherto been chiefly confined to the Netherlands. Nor was it long till an opportunity occurred of rendering an indirect assistance to their miserable country. Philip, having contracted with some Genoese merchants to transport into Flanders a sum of four hundred thousand crowns for the use of his troops, who were almost in a state of mutiny for the want of pay, the vessels on board of which this treasure was conveyed, happening to be attacked in the channel by some privateers belonging to the French Hugonots, took refuge in the ports of Plymouth and Southampton. Here it was given out, both by the captains of the vessels and the Spanish ambassador, that their cargoes were the property of the king of Spain; but Cecil, who had always the best means of procuring intelligence, found out that the money, in fact, did not belong to Philip, that the Genoese merchants had not yet fulfilled their contract, and were, in consequence, the proprietors of the treasure. On this discovery, he entreated the queen not to neglect so favourable an opportunity of striking a decisive blow against the Spanish power in Flanders. By taking the money as a loan, and by giving security for its repayment, he argued that

* Grotius, lib. ii.

she might satisfy the Genoese, while the measure would effectually wound the interests of Spain, without any direct hostility. With this advice Elizabeth complied, and the event demonstrated its sagacity. While the duke of Alva, thrown into the greatest embarrassment by the loss of his expected supplies, was obliged, to prevent an immediate mutiny among his troops, to make the most severe exactions from the inhabitants; the tyrannical manner in which they were levied, stretched the patience of the people to the utmost, and prepared their minds for the most desperate resistance.*

This transaction, which produced irreparable evils to the Spanish power in the Low Countries, gave rise to some temporary hostilities between Spain and England. The duke of Alva seized the persons and goods of the English merchants in the Netherlands, and Elizabeth retaliated on the merchants of Flanders and Spain. But as Philip had not yet matured his schemes for taking effectual vengeance on England, and as his antagonist did not consider the time arrived for a final rupture with him, these differences were settled by negotiation, and the merchants on both sides indemnified. Elizabeth even yielded so far to the remonstrances of Philip, as to refuse the Flemish refugees admittance for the future into her dominions; but this act of complaisance was followed by very unexpected consequences. These sufferers, finding no place of refuge from their enemies, returned, in despair, to their own coasts, seized the sea-port of the Brille; and, being soon joined by crowds of their persecuted countrymen, reared the standard of revolt throughout Holland and Zealand. A solemn league between these two provinces, never again to submit to the tyranny of Spain, now laid the corner-stone of Dutch independence. The stand which the talents of their general, the prince of Orange, united with their own desperate valour, enabled them to make against this mighty monarchy, far exceeded the general expectation.

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. Nanton's Fragmenta Regalia. Bentivoglio, part i. lib. v.

It was not till after a long siege and great loss that the duke of Alva succeeded in taking Haarlem; and he was finally compelled to abandon his attempts on Alkmaer. The duke was recalled; but the veteran forces of Spain, supported by her great resources, still pressed severely on the Hollanders, who seemed about to sink under the unequal contest. In this emergency their eyes were turned to their only remaining hope,—an embassy which they had sent to Elizabeth, imploring her protection, and offering her in return the immediate possession and sovereignty of their country.

A valuable accession of maritime territory, as well as an opportunity of immediately enfeebling her capital enemy, presented very powerful temptations. But many weighty objections naturally occurred to her sagacious counsellors. It was apparent that, to accept the proffered sovereignty, would involve her in immediate hostilities with Philip; that he would be enabled to throw on her the reproach of aggression and injustice; that, as these provinces had applied to her merely from the insufficiency of their own resources, it was probable that she would have to sustain the great burden of the contest; that, from the exhausted state in which, even if ultimately successful, they would naturally be left by the war, their revenues could not speedily repair the waste of her resources which their defence must occasion; but that, as against the immense power of Philip their success was very doubtful, a present and certain loss would be incurred for distant and precarious advantages. Nor were the more remote evils less to be apprehended, since the possession of a continental territory would necessarily involve England in many disputes and wars, from which her insular situation seemed designed to exempt her. The influence of these considerations on the mind of Elizabeth was greatly increased by her unwillingness to abet subjects in resistance to their monarch. Her ideas of sovereign power were, indeed, scarcely less lofty than those of Philip; and the depression of a dangerous enemy seemed too dearly purchased by an ex-

ample of successful rebellion. She refused the proffered sovereignty, but she endeavoured to soften the disappointment to the provinces by promising to mediate between them and Philip.

Her attempts at conciliation were, as might have been foreseen, ineffectual; but the circumstances of the Hollanders soon afterwards experienced an alteration which justified a corresponding change in the policy of England. The other provinces of the Netherlands, abused beyond endurance by the horrible excesses of the Spanish troops, had, with the single exception of Luxembourg, risen in arms, and formed a common league to resist foreign tyranny. The strength of the confederacy was now sufficient to give it a fair prospect of success, and the English government resolved to assist the provinces without delay. A sum of money was sent over for the immediate payment of their troops; and a treaty of mutual defence afterwards concluded with them, on the prudential and frugal system which Cecil continually enforced. The queen stipulated to assist the Hollanders with five thousand foot and a thousand horse, but this reinforcement was to be at their charge; to lend them a hundred thousand pounds, but to receive, in return, the bond of several towns in the Low Countries for its repayment within the year. It was also agreed that, in the event of her being attacked, the provinces should assist her with a force equal to that which she now sent for their protection; that all quarrels among themselves should be referred to her arbitration; that her general should sit as a member in the council of the states, and should be made acquainted with all deliberations concerning peace and war.* By this treaty the queen raised the courage of the United Provinces at a critical juncture, effectually weakened her capital enemy, and avoided any considerable waste of her own resources.

But the independence of this noble republic was not to be accomplished without a new succession of difficulties and dangers. By the uncommon talents of the

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. p. 507.

prince of Parma, who now commanded against the states, and the assassination of their illustrious leader, the prince of Orange, they were again reduced to the most desperate condition. Again they sent a solemn embassy to implore the assistance of Elizabeth, and again proffered their sovereignty as the price of protection. The reasons which formerly induced her to decline this offer still led her to the same determination; but, as the enmity of Philip was daily becoming more apparent, and the success of the states more essential to her security, it was her evident policy to render them more effectual assistance. In a new treaty, she agreed to aid them with an army of five thousand foot and one thousand horse, to be paid by herself during the war; but, not forgetting the maxims of prudence amidst her liberality, she stipulated that the whole of her expenses should be repaid after the conclusion of hostilities; that the castle of Rammekens, with Flushing and the Brille, should, in the mean time, be placed in her hands as security; that her general, and two others of her appointment, should be admitted into the council of the states; and that neither of the contracting parties should make a separate peace. The reinforcements stipulated by this treaty were speedily sent over, under the command of the earl of Leicester.* The appointment of this incapable and arrogant officer is said to have been the only step, in the transactions relative to the Low Countries, that was taken in opposition to the counsels of Cecil.† It was also the only circumstance that led to unprosperous events, and impaired the efficacy of the English succours.

Although the United Provinces, in their struggle for freedom, encountered many disasters, still their persevering courage, aided by some favourable incidents, gradually began to gain on their enemies. From a habit of successful resistance, they learned to look on the power of Spain, and the chances of war, with less apprehension: the active spirit excited among them began to display itself in commercial enterprises, which quickly

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. p. 508. † Leicester's Commonwealth, p. 195.

augmented their resources. A powerful diversion was also produced in their favour by Henry the Fourth of France, who, after having subdued his internal enemies, now began to retaliate the many hostile acts of Philip in the days of his adversity. Perceiving this favourable change in the circumstances of the states, which rendered them in less immediate want of assistance from England, Cecil, always averse to waste the blood and treasure of the nation in superfluous efforts, began to remind the queen that it was now time to diminish her disbursements in behalf of her allies. To this suggestion she readily hearkened; and, that the limitation of her intended retrenchments might appear a favour, she desired her ambassador to demand the immediate repayment of all her loans and expenses. Against this unexpected requisition, with which they were wholly unable to comply, the states, in much consternation, remonstrated; and, after many supplications, prevailed on the queen to be satisfied with more moderate conditions. By a new treaty, they engaged to relieve her immediately from the expense of their English auxiliaries; to pay her annually a small part of their debt; to assist her, in case it should be requisite, with a stipulated number of ships; to conclude peace only with her concurrence; and, in lieu of all her demands against them, to pay her, after the conclusion of peace with Spain, an annual sum of one hundred thousand pounds for four years. Until all these conditions should be fulfilled, the cautionary towns were to remain in her hands. On her part, it was merely stipulated that she should assist them, during the war, with a body of four thousand English auxiliaries, which, however, were to be paid by the states.*

Before the termination of his political career, Cecil had the satisfaction to conclude another treaty, in which still more favourable conditions were procured for England. The states agreed to fix the amount of their debt at eight hundred thousand pounds; to pay one half of this sum during the war, at the rate of thirty thousand pounds

* Camden, Annal. Eliz. p. 586.

a year; to assist Elizabeth with a fleet equal to her own, if a convenient opportunity should occur of attacking Spain by sea; and to send a force of five thousand foot and five hundred horse to her defence, if either England, or Jersey, or Scilly, or the Isle of Wight, should be invaded by the Spaniards. They farther agreed that, so long as England should continue the war with Spain, they should pay the garrisons of the cautionary towns,—a stipulation by which this country was at once freed from an annual charge of an hundred and twenty thousand pounds.*

The first avowed assistance which England rendered to the United Provinces was the signal for open hostilities with Spain; and Philip, to gratify at once his revenge and ambition, attempted, by means of his famous armada, to achieve the entire conquest of England. But as the failure of this immense armament, and various successful attacks on the fleets and harbours of Spain, gave the English a superiority at sea, Philip, finding his losses increase as his hopes diminished, showed a disposition to make peace on reasonable terms. This favourable opportunity of entering into negotiation Cecil now strongly urged the queen to seize; for although the war continued to be very successful and very honourable, yet he felt the wounds which it inflicted, under every appearance of advantage. By their captures from the Spaniards, a few individuals were enriched, and Elizabeth generally took care to have her full share in these successful adventures; still the royal treasury was exhausted by the expenses of the war, and the reluctant queen frequently forced to replenish it by applying to parliament.

The war, however, was continued, because it offered temptations which neither the queen nor the people were able to resist. The scarcity of the precious metals rendered their value in these days extravagant; and the rich freights transported from the New World to Spain presented the most powerful excitement to avarice.

* Rymer's Fœdera, vol. xvi. p. 340.

Stimulated by these, sir Francis Drake had, even before the commencement of open hostilities with Spain, begun his depredations on her commerce; and by the treasures which he brought home, as well as the accounts which he circulated, inflamed the avidity of his countrymen. Against these piratical acts the Spaniards vehemently remonstrated; but Elizabeth accepted of an entertainment and a handsome present from Drake, and gave the Spanish ambassador very little satisfaction. Encouraged by the countenance of their sovereign, and at length authorised by an open declaration of war, English privateers swarmed around the Spanish coast, both in Europe and America. These enterprises became the usual adventure of the times, by which the rich expected to increase their wealth, and the prodigal to repair their fortunes. In the event of a rich prize, Elizabeth was not forgotten; nor did she ever refuse to gratify the captors by graciously accepting their presents. These exploits were usually undertaken in partnership, and a vessel or two were sometimes furnished by her majesty; a speculation which seldom failed to turn to the benefit of the treasury, as the queen's portion of the booty, by means of duties, presents, and various other allowances, generally proved much greater than her share in the equipment. An adventure of sir Walter Raleigh having proved very successful, that experienced courtier humbly entreated the queen, who had borne a tenth part in the expense, to accept one half of the booty, in lieu of all demands. In these enterprises many, indeed, lost both their fortunes and their lives; but the successful adventurers alone attracted the public notice, and this lottery continued to prove irresistibly tempting.

It is probable that Cecil, who attended so much to the progress of national industry and wealth, perceived many bad consequences from this mode of warfare. The attention of the nation was withdrawn from manufactures and commerce; the capital and enterprise, which would otherwise have remained to the useful arts, were wasted on schemes of hazard. The people,

neglecting those employments from which alone solid and general opulence can be derived, were in danger of acquiring the habits and calculations of pirates. But there were other and more generous passions which rendered the court and the people unwilling to hearken to the representations of Cecil. Although Spain was at that time the most powerful nation in Europe, the English, with vessels far inferior, had harassed her mightiest fleet, captured her richest convoys, and even burnt her ships in her principal harbours. These successes, obtained by courage and skill over a haughty enemy, greatly elevated the spirits of our countrymen; and the glory of the English arms became a triumphant theme in every mouth. To pursue this gallant course, to follow up these blows by new achievements, to lay the pride of Spain prostrate at their feet, were the expressions which resounded throughout the nation.

Into these sentiments Elizabeth cordially entered; for, with all the soundness of her understanding, love of fame was a predominant passion in her breast, and nothing could exceed her desire of being admired, whether for the imagined charms of her person, or the heroic exploits of her subjects. In the present question, the influence of vanity was confirmed by a more tender sentiment. The young earl of Essex had now succeeded to that place in her affections which had formerly been held by the earl of Leicester. No quality which could captivate seemed to be wanting in this young nobleman. A person uncommonly handsome derived new graces from manners easy, frank, and popular; and such was the ascendancy of these external advantages, united to a nature liberal and ardent, that he had the rare fortune of being no less the idol of the people than the favourite of the sovereign. Yet these shining qualities were accompanied by defects which rendered him particularly unfit for the management of public affairs. Impatient, passionate, and wilful, he was so jealous of his honour, as to be inflamed by even an imaginary insult; so greedy of fame, that every successful rival appeared an

enemy; so fond of military glory, that no considerations of policy could restrain him from precipitating his country into a war where he might earn distinction; and yet so unfit, from imprudence and heat, for conducting military operations, that no enterprise could safely be trusted to his hands. He had acquired some reputation in the Spanish war, and eagerly panted for more; he stood forward, therefore, as the vehement opposer of Cecil's propositions for peace; and his influence over the queen's affections, joined to the other considerations which we have mentioned, was sufficient to counteract the intentions of the minister.

Cecil was no less interested for the glory of his country than Essex; but while he felt how much security depends on political reputation, he perceived the folly of attempting to render a nation glorious by wasting her resources, or great by reducing her to imbecility. He knew that, with the substance, the shadow must disappear; that if the resources of an empire are exhausted, the reputation founded on them must soon vanish. Averse to the waste of public property, and detesting the wanton effusion of human blood, he could not, without indignation, see both sovereign and people led away by the same passions as Essex, and surrendering the reins of their understandings to the delusions of a heated brain. On one occasion, when the question of peace and war was debated in council, Essex proceeded, as usual, to declaim in favour of continuing hostilities; urging that the Spaniards, being a subtle people, ambitious of extending their dominion, implacable enemies to England, bigoted adherents of the pope, and professing that no faith was to be observed with heretics, were incapable of maintaining the relations of peace. Cecil, who felt that, if such arguments prevailed, the sword would never be sheathed, could not help indignantly exclaiming, in the midst of this harangue, "that the speaker seemed intent on nothing but blood and slaughter." At the close of the debate,

perceiving that his reasoning was of no avail against the impulses of passion, he pulled out a common prayer-book from his pocket, and pointed in silence to the words, "Men of blood shall not live half their days."* He felt that time and experience could alone dispel the delusion; still he endeavoured to accelerate that desirable event, by the publication of a tract, containing his arguments for peace; these, though disregarded by the multitude, were too distinct and forcible not to impress the reflecting and moderate.†

In the policy pursued by England towards France, as the passions of men were less interested, the councils of Cecil were followed, with little deviation. During the short and feeble reign of Francis II. the duke of Guise, with his four brothers, uncles to Mary queen of Scots, had obtained a complete ascendancy in the French government. Powerful from the influence of their house, and dignified by their alliance with the royal family, their talents, joined to a restless, daring ambition, overpowered their antagonists, and reduced their monarch to a mere instrument in their hands. The recapture of Calais from England, which the duke had unexpectedly effected, procured him unrivalled popularity; while his standing forth as the leader of the catholics against the Hugonots, gave him unlimited sway over the most numerous portion of the people. As the champion of his faith, he prepared to enforce its adoption with fire and sword, and to exterminate protestantism throughout France. The leaders of the Hugonots flew to arms; but, from their inadequate resources, they were quickly reduced to extremities, and, in despair, applied to Elizabeth for succour. Her compliance was enforced by the most evident interest, as the ambitious Guise aspired to place his niece Mary on the throne of England as well as of Scotland. A supply of men and money was accordingly sent without delay.

Throughout all the measures of Elizabeth towards the French Hugonots we perceive the cautious and

* Camden, p. 608. † Ibid.

frugal policy of Cecil. He was of opinion that the French protestants should, from time to time, be furnished with such supplies as might enable them to make head against their enemies; but that it would be folly to embroil his country farther than this object required. France and England had long regarded each other as dangerous rivals; and he understood human nature too well, to suppose that a change of religion in the government would alter these sentiments. A French sovereign, whether popish or protestant, would, he knew, be almost equally dangerous to England; and he deemed it extreme folly in this country to waste her resources in procuring a decided ascendancy to either the insurgent or the royalist faction.

Such were the maxims which guided the conduct of Elizabeth during the French civil wars. When the Hugonots were almost driven to despair, in the minority of Charles IX., she furnished them with some money and troops; but a part of the money was advanced by way of loan; and, in return, she obliged her allies to put Havre de Grace into her hands, as a pledge that Calais should be restored to the English crown. When the young duke of Guise, at a subsequent period, had begun to emulate the enterprises of his father, and had reduced the protestants to extreme distress, she again revived their spirits by timely assistance; but it consisted merely in exciting the protestant German princes to their support; in lending them a sum of money, for which the jewels of the queen of Navarre were deposited with her in pledge; and in permitting a hundred gentlemen volunteers to pass over into France, where they fought at their own charge.*

The massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which the court of France butchered such multitudes of their unsuspecting protestant subjects, naturally excited the horror of all the protestant states of Europe. The English, fired with indignation, eagerly expected to see their government stand forward to avenge the rights of religion and

* Camden, p. 423.

humanity; and so earnest were the nobility and gentry in the cause, that they offered to levy an army of 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse, to transport them to France, and maintain them at their own expense.* But Elizabeth, instructed by her wise counsellors, perceived too well the consequences of such a crusade, to second the hasty resentment of her subjects. She was aware that an attack on France, to be effectual, would require such a waste of resources as must enfeeble the nation, and render abortive all the frugal measures of her reign; that Charles and Philip, from a similarity of malignant passions, had formed a close union; that, against such a combination, the success of her utmost efforts in behalf of the French protestants was, at best, very doubtful; that the only certain effect of an attack on France would be to exasperate that nation, and exhaust her own, and thus render Charles and Philip both more eager and more able to accomplish her destruction. But while she prudently dissembled her indignation till a more favourable opportunity, by her secret pecuniary aids to the Hugonots she enabled them again to take the field against Charles, and to procure from his successor, Henry III., conditions comparatively favourable.†

When the gallant king of Navarre was afterwards called to the throne of France, she openly assisted him against that formidable league of the catholics, which threatened ruin to them both. The apprehended desertion of his Swiss and German auxiliaries she prevented by a gift of 22,000*l.*, a greater sum, as he declared, than he had ever before seen; and she added a reinforcement of 4000 men, to whose valour he owed some important successes. A body of Spanish forces having been introduced into Britany, she furnished 3000 men to hasten the expulsion of these dangerous neighbours; but stipulated that her charges should be repaid her in a twelvemonth, or as soon as the enemy

* Digges, p. 335. † Camden, p. 452.

was expelled.* She afterwards sent another reinforcement of 4000 men to effect this object, which proved of great difficulty. Finally, she formed an alliance with the French king, in which it was agreed that they should make no peace with Philip but by common consent; that she should assist Henry with a reinforcement of 4000 men; and that he, in return, should refund her charges in a twelvemonth, employ a body of troops in aid of her forces in expelling the Spaniards from Britany, and consign into her hands a seaport of that province for a retreat to the English.† On various occasions she advanced him sums to the amount of 100,000*l.*, but always in the form of a loan; and when, at length, he began to acquire a decided superiority over his enemies, her succours became more sparing as his exigencies became less pressing.

While Elizabeth thus avoided a waste of her resources, her aid was so efficient, that Henry IV. gratefully attributed his triumph to her assistance. A more liberal distribution of her succours would often have been agreeable to him, yet, as he could not but admire a conduct so wise, and dictated by maxims so congenial to his own, he continued her steady and sincere friend to the end of her life. Accustomed as we have been, in the present age, to see vast expeditions undertaken against our continental enemies, and vast subsidies thrown, without reflection, into the hands of our allies; we may be apt to look on this policy of Elizabeth's government as timid and ungenerous. Yet, with an ex-

* Camden, p. 561. When we compare these diminutive aids with the immense armaments sent to the assistance of allies in the present times, we may be surprised to hear Burleigh extolling the liberality of Elizabeth on this occasion, as something altogether extraordinary. Alluding, in a letter to our envoy in France, to this body of auxiliaries under sir John Norris, he adds, "and besides that, her majesty hath presently sent away certain of her ships of war under the charge of sir Henry Palmer, with the number of a thousand men or thereabouts, to serve upon the coast of Bretagne against the Spaniards and against the Leaguers, thereby her majesty's charges grow daily so great, as the French king hath great cause to acknowledge her majesty's goodness towards him, *beyond all other friendships that he hath in the world.* And therefore you may do well, when you find opportunity, to notify these so great charges both of her majesty and of her realm, as we may hereafter find thankfulness both in the king and in his subjects." Birch's Memoirs of Eliz. vol. i. p. 66.

† Rymer, vol. xvi.

pense of men and money almost too trifling to be perceptible, it procured, for England, advantages greater perhaps than would have resulted from mighty armaments and lavish disbursements. Her protestant allies were not alarmed by the overwhelming succours of an ancient enemy, nor rendered odious in the sight of their countrymen by a too evident dependence on a foreign power. The French people were not roused to any general combination against her, from the apprehension of passing under her yoke, or sustaining the dismemberment of their territory.

The policy which the English government pursued with respect to Scotland, led to some of the most questionable incidents of Elizabeth's reign. That country, narrow and thinly peopled as it was, required the incessant attention of its southern neighbour. England, divided from the rest of the world by stormy seas, on which her own fleets now began to ride triumphant, could not be assailed without the most imminent hazard. As a foreign enemy, surrounded by an uncertain element and annoyed by her fleets, which might eventually cut off both his supplies and his retreat, could hope for safety only from her entire subjugation; the preparations requisite for such an enterprise would be too vast to be long concealed, and too protracted to be completed before her plans for defence should be matured. But against Scotland she was aided by no such bulwark: in that country stood an array of combatants, dexterous in regular warfare, and separated from her only by a fordable river, or an imaginary line; they might assemble and invade her in force, before the news of their approach could reach the seat of government. Even if her hasty levies should succeed in repelling the incursion, still the enemy might retire to his own country, loaded with booty, and secure from pursuit; while the loss of a battle might expose all her northern counties to devastation.

These, the permanent dangers from an enemy in the north, were at this time increased by circumstances of

great importance, Since Mary, the youthful queen of Scotland, had espoused the heir apparent to the throne of France, the counsels and energies of both these countries were under the control of her ambitious maternal uncles, the princes of Lorraine. The enterprises which these daring leaders had planned, led them to exert the whole of their power in attempting to dethrone Elizabeth. They had founded their plans on standing forth as the champions of the church, and leaders of the catholic league; while the power of Elizabeth formed the great bulwark of the protestants. Nor did their means seem inadequate to the mighty undertaking of subverting her throne, and acquiring the uncontrolled sway of the three kingdoms. The title of their niece, Mary, to the throne of England was accounted preferable to that of Elizabeth by all good catholics, who held the marriage of Henry with Catharine to be indissoluble, unless by the authority of the pope. The portion of the English people which still adhered to the Romish communion was considerable, while the favourers of the Reformation in Scotalnd seemed as yet no ways formidable. If heresy could there be checked in the bud, and the whole Scottish nation rendered the partisans of their cause, the princes of Lorraine had grounds for expectations by no means chimerical. From France, from Spain, and the other countries which abetted the catholic league, they might hope to pour into Scotland such a body of disciplined troops, as, uniting with the natives, and entering England on her defenceless side, should disperse the raw levies of Elizabeth, and place their niece on her throne.

These intentions were manifested by the first movements in the gigantic plan. No sooner was the death of Mary of England announced in France, than the queen of Scots and her husband endeavoured to keep alive the hopes of their partisans by assuming the arms and title of king and queen of England. This parade proved rather injurious than useful to the projects of the house of Guise, by discovering their designs, and putting their enemies on their guard; but more energetic measures

were, in conformity to their counsels, adopted by their sister, the queen dowager and regent of Scotland. That princess, naturally moderate and politic, had hitherto pursued a system so mild and conciliating, as had, in a great measure, lulled the dangerous dissensions of her country. Now, however, from an undue subserviency to the designs of her brothers, the fatal error of her character, she began to attempt the extirpation of protestantism, by mingling a cruelty which should have shocked her humanity, with a faithlessness from which her moral feelings ought to have revolted. The sufferers at length betook themselves to arms; but the vigour and dexterity of the regent, supported by a body of veteran French troops, soon compelled them to implore assistance from the common protectress of the Reformation.

There were certain circumstances which rendered Elizabeth much less forward in their support than her interest seemed to demand. The principles of the Scottish protestants, especially in regard to the form of worship, went far beyond her ideas of reformation; and the strong tincture of republicanism which appeared in their politics rendered them, in her eyes, suspected and dangerous. To abet rebellious subjects, is always a delicate undertaking for sovereigns; but in a country so closely connected with her own, by vicinity, language, and manners, it seemed most unsafe to encourage the supporters of those civil and religious principles, which, at home, all her authority was employed to suppress.* To these dissuasives, her love of economy gave additional force; since it was manifest that the necessities of the Scots would require considerable supplies, while their poverty left her no hope of reimbursement.

It was, we are informed, by the representations of Cecil that she at length permitted these considerations to give way to others still more urgent and important. Two papers, written with his own hand, and still pre-

* Elizabeth's Letter to the Earl of Bedford, in Appendix, No. XIII. to Robertson's Scotland.

served, contain the reasonings in which he explained to the queen and her council the propriety and necessity of interfering in the affairs of Scotland.* Setting out with the principle that every society has a right to provide for its security both against present and future dangers, and to turn against its enemies the means employed by them for its annoyance, he proceeds to show, that the safety of England could be secured only by sending powerful and immediate assistance to the Scottish protestants. Elizabeth felt the force of these arguments; but her first succours, consisting in some small remittances of money, were so inadequate, as to produce no effect in favour of her friends. Afterwards, however, when Scotland could not otherwise be rescued from entire subjugation by her enemies, she formed with the protestants a league offensive and defensive; sent a powerful fleet to guard the Forth against reinforcements from France, and, by the aid of a land force, enabled the Scots to drive the French from the field, and besiege them in their last refuge at Leith.

This timely and vigorous effort, in support of the Scottish protestants, led to a treaty in which Cecil and Dr. Wotton, the plenipotentiaries of Elizabeth, partly from their talents, partly from the desperate situation of their enemies, procured the most advantageous terms for their allies. The Scottish parliament, of which the great majority now adhered to the reformed faith, obtained almost the whole direction of public affairs. It was stipulated, that this assembly should meet and act with the same full powers as if formally convoked by the sovereign: that, during the absence of their young queen, the administration should be vested in twelve commissioners, of which the queen should select seven, and the parliament five, out of twenty-four persons named by the parliament: that, without the consent of this assembly, neither war should be declared nor peace concluded: that the French troops should be immediately removed to their own country, and the fortresses of Leith and Dun-

* Burnet, vol. iii. Appendix.

bar, then in their possession, demolished: that in future no foreign troops should be introduced, and no fort erected, without the permission of parliament: that no foreigner should hereafter be advanced to any place of trust or dignity in the kingdom: and that there should be a general act of amnesty for those who had opposed the measures of government. The security of the protestant faith was fully provided for by an article which left all matters respecting religion to the decision of parliament.*

The politic moderation of Elizabeth and her ministers was conspicuous in the articles stipulated for England. The English forces as well as the French were to be withdrawn from Scotland; former treaties were renewed, and the only additional article was, that the right of Elizabeth to the English throne should be formally acknowledged, Mary and her husband ceasing, from thenceforward, to assume the title or bear the arms of England. Elizabeth had indeed enjoined her plenipotentiaries to demand 500,000 crowns, and the restitution of Calais, as a compensation for the indignity already offered to her, by the assumption of her arms and title: but these conditions, to which the French commissioners had no power to agree, were at length referred to future discussion.†

At so small an expense, and with an exertion so trivial, compared to the magnitude of the object, did the English government, by its vigour and sagacity, succeed in giving a complete ascendancy to its protestant allies in Scotland. And when the catholic religion was abolished, and the reformed established by law, that country, instead of affording particular facilities to the enemies of Elizabeth, became a new bulwark to her throne.

The return of Mary to Scotland, and her assumption of the reins of government, led to plans of policy, in which the passions of Elizabeth interfered so much with

* Keith, 137. Rymer, vol. xv. p. 593.
† See Letter of Elizabeth to Cecil and Wotton, in Lodge's Illustrations of British History, vol. i. p. 338.

the dictates of her understanding, and the counsels of her ministers, that we are bewildered amidst the effects of an irresolution, duplicity, and contradiction, which her usual systematic procedure does not prepare us to expect. The unfortunate Mary undertook the administration of her kingdom in circumstances where the sagacity of experience and the coolness of age could scarcely have conducted to a successful issue the delicate interests committed to youth and indiscretion. Her subjects, still in the ferment of a religious revolution, entertained violent prejudices against their sovereign. It was fresh in their recollection, that the cruel persecutions from which they had just escaped were carried on at the instigation of Mary's uncles, and under the authority of her mother; and they knew that plans were concerted by the house of Guise for the final extirpation of the protestant religion. Unfortunately they had too strong reasons to suspect that their queen, devoted to popery and to the will of her uncles, would not scruple to concur in the most dangerous designs. Stimulated by these considerations, they scrutinised every step of her conduct with the most jealous care: and as the rudeness of manners in that age had been heightened by the convulsions and dangers of a revolution, they treated her with a harshness, which, in her eyes, might well appear indignity to a sovereign, and brutality to a woman.

Mary, educated in the polished, gay, and arbitrary court of France, was equally shocked with the coarseness of the Scots, the moroseness of their manners, and the republican principles which they had imbibed with their new religion. Nor were her more serious thoughts less outraged than her taste. While scarcely allowed to exercise, in her private chapel, those rites to which she was fondly attached, she daily heard them treated with insulting contumely, and herself reproached as a deluded and desperate idolatress. With a spirit too high and with passions too lively to submit to such mortification, or to win the confidence of her people by a train of prudent and conciliating measures, she endeavoured, in the

conversation and amusements of a few favourite domestics, to recall her former scenes of enjoyment, and to lose the recollection of her present hardships. But, by a peculiar infelicity, the attachments of Mary were more fatal to her happiness than even her aversions; and the unworthy objects on whom her affection was successively fixed proved the principal means of precipitating her ruin. By her choice of a youth whose head and heart were no less defective than his external appearance was captivating, a catholic in his creed, and a libertine in his morals, she shocked the pious, and alienated the wise*: and when her infatuated fondness was soon succeeded by unconquerable aversion, the change was attributed, not to the return of reason, but the fickleness of passion. The confidence and familiarity with which she distinguished an unworthy minion seemed to argue a strange depravity of taste; which her enemies readily accounted for by supposing a still stranger depravity of morals. But when, in opposition to the united voice of her subjects, to all laws divine and human, she bestowed her affections on the murderer of her husband, screened him from the vengeance of outraged justice, and made him the partaker of her bed and her authority, the indignation of her subjects could no longer be kept within the bounds of allegiance. They took up arms against her, formally deposed her from the sovereignty, and finally compelled her to seek for refuge in England.

During these transactions, the interference of the English government was hesitating, indecisive, and contradictory. The confidential ministers of Elizabeth, strongly tinctured with the religious opinions of the Scottish reformers, and looking on the ascendancy of Mary as the chief source of danger to their government, appear to have been unanimously of opinion that the Scottish protestants ought to be supported; and their queen, if not dethroned, at least involved in perpetual difficulties. Had Elizabeth consulted merely her per-

* See Letter from Randolph to Leicester, in Appendix XI. to Robertson's Scotland.

sonal feelings towards Mary, her measures would have been no less hostile than the counsels of her ministers. Her resentment against a competitor who had assumed her title, and affected to consider her birth as illegitimate, was aggravated by hatred of a rival who eclipsed her in those personal charms of which she was no less tenacious than of her sovereignty. The animosity thus fostered in her breast became apparent on various occasions. When Mary, on her return from France to her own dominions, solicited a safe-conduct from Elizabeth, this request, although a mere matter of complaisance, was refused by the latter, with an ill-humour which seemed to indicate very unfriendly intentions.* In the same manner, every overture for the marriage of the Scottish queen was industriously counteracted by her jealous neighbour; and when Darnley at length became the object of her choice, Elizabeth reproached her with this marriage, as with a crime against herself and her government. Nor did Mary take any measures to conciliate a rival whom she looked on as the usurper of her rights, and the enemy of her person and religion. She refused to ratify that article of the treaty of Edinburgh by which she was bound to renounce her claims to the English throne; and she occasionally expressed her indignation, with more frankness than prudence, against the ill-concealed malignity of Elizabeth.†

Yet, notwithstanding her personal animosity to Mary, the queen of England was far from entering cordially into the views of the Scottish protestants. Their tenets, both civil and religious, so nearly allied to those of her own puritans, were the object of her decided aversion; their ascendancy was the last means by which she wished the humiliation of her rival. The imprudent attachments, and the consequent unpopularity and ignominy of the Scottish queen, probably afforded her more satisfaction than regret; and it appears that her ambassadors, of themselves well inclined to the task, were encouraged in fomenting the dissensions between the

* See Appendix VI. to Robertson's Scotland. † Keith, App. 159.

court and the people of Scotland. But when the "Congregation" proceeded to try their sovereign for the crimes of which she was accused, and to deprive her of her throne and her liberty in consequence of their own award, the high monarchical sentiments of Elizabeth were alarmed. She sternly demanded an explanation of their presumptuous conduct; and as their republican justification was even more offensive to her than their measures, she endeavoured by threats to procure the release and restoration of their sovereign. She seems even to have formed the resolution of attempting this object by force of arms, in opposition to the strenuous remonstrances of Cecil and her other ministers, who represented the danger of employing her arms to crush her most useful friends, and reinstate her mortal enemy. So thoroughly were the Scottish protestants convinced of her alienation from their interests, that they refused her ambassador admittance to their captive queen, and prepared to support themselves by other alliances. Already had their overtures been favourably received by the French, who made no scruple of abandoning Mary, provided they could maintain their ascendancy in Scotland; and the English resident had repeatedly warned his court of this danger, inevitable, unless Elizabeth should alter her conduct towards the Scottish protestants.*

The escape of Mary from confinement, and her subsequent retreat into England, produced a new course of policy on the part of Elizabeth. Her confidential ministers, more alive to the supposed interests of their country and religion than to the dictates of generosity, seem to have been unanimously of opinion, that the Scottish queen, instead of being aided by Elizabeth against her subjects, should, under specious pretences, be detained in a lasting captivity.† Her enmity to the

* See a Letter from sir Nicholas Throgmorton to Cecil, in Appendix XXI. to Robertson's Scotland. Also from the same to queen Elizabeth, ibid.

† Lodge, vol. ii. p. 4, 5. A remarkable letter from the Earl of Sussex to Cecil, written so early after the flight of Mary as the 22d of October, 1568, and containing an urgent exhortation to that very policy which was after-

protestant religion, and to Elizabeth, they considered implacable; and were she restored by the arms of England to her throne, she would not, they thought, scruple to turn her regained authority against her benefactors. On the other hand, her detention would give the English government a complete control over the affairs of Scotland; for the Scottish protestants would not fail to respect her will while she had their queen in her hands, and could punish them by restoring an exasperated sovereign to their throne. Nor did they see how these advantages could be attained by a procedure less harsh than the captivity of Mary. To refuse her an asylum would be replete with danger: that high-spirited princess would not fail to raise France and Spain in her cause; to procure from their willing ambition large forces for her restoration; and, stimulated both by ancient and recent animosities, to employ her recovered power in hostility to England.

These representations produced a powerful impression on Elizabeth, confirmed as they were by certain peculiarities in the situation of her rival, which admitted of severe measures being taken against her, without compromising the cause of sovereigns, or exciting general indignation against herself. Mary was accused of a crime horrible to mankind, — participation in the murder of her husband; and her marriage with his reputed murderer had impressed a belief of her guilt, not easily to be effaced. While she laboured under the general indignation, her detention would be applauded by many, and warmly resented by none. On the other hand, the throne, if upheld as a sanctuary for such crimes, would become odious in the eyes of all; and Elizabeth, in supporting such a tenet, would weaken her own authority while she outraged the feelings of mankind.

These considerations made Elizabeth determine to detain the Scottish queen, not as a royal guest, who had

wards pursued with regard to her, is inserted in the Appendix. Also the deliberations of Cecil on the same subject.

come to claim her protection, but as a prisoner brought by happy accident into her power. From this commencement her hatred to Mary progressively increased by a variety of causes. Conscious that the detention of Mary was a new source of resentment, the commission of the injury became a cause for its aggravation. Deriving, from the ill-advised concessions and subsequent retractations of the Scottish queen, a semblance of right to judge in her cause, and a colour for assuming her guilt as undeniable, both she and her people came gradually to regard the captive less as a sovereign princess than as a criminal subject of England. The mind of Elizabeth was perpetually agitated by the apprehension of her prisoner's escape, and more than once by the discovery of conspiracies, which Mary incautiously countenanced. All these proved new incentives to her hatred, and prompted her to a measure from which her tenderness for the rights of sovereigns would at first have made her revolt with horror.

From the letters and the conduct of Elizabeth in regard to Mary, we perceive that she aimed at two irreconcilable objects. She longed for the destruction of her dangerous prisoner, and she no less earnestly desired to have it accomplished without her apparent concurrence or connivance. She seems to have long hoped that Mary would sink under the rigours of her confinement, or fall a sacrifice to the discontent of her keeper.* The earl of Shrewsbury, to whose custody she was intrusted, was subjected to great restraint and privation. Although entirely devoted to Elizabeth, and sufficiently willing to deprive Mary of every enjoyment *, his disposition was rendered still more narrow and intractable, by the severe and ungenerous usage which he experienced from his sovereign. The allowances which he received for the maintenance of the queen of Scots were so inadequate, that the deficiency impaired his private fortune; and after many years of this unprofitable charge, when he at length expected

* See Shrewsbury's letter to lord Burghley, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 68.

some signal mark of royal bounty, to his inexpressible astonishment and mortification, he received an order from court by which his appointments, instead of being increased, were diminished one half.* When the retrenchments, which this strange piece of economy naturally led him to make in the diet and accommodations of Mary, were complained of by the French ambassador, Shrewsbury received a letter from court, expressing the displeasure of his queen in strong terms, but containing no intimation that his former allowances would be restored.†

Other circumstances concurred to make Shrewsbury dissatisfied with his charge. As his whole time and attention were occupied in watching over his prisoner, his private affairs were neglected; and his tenants, in various parts of the country, taking advantage of his situation, contrived to evade his claims, by involving him in troublesome lawsuits.‡ If he ventured on an excursion from the residence of Mary, he was sure to be reminded§, by a severe reprimand, of his duty.‖ If a friend happened to pay him a visit, a letter full of insinuations showed him that the jealousy of his sovereign was roused. At length, by a strange excess of severity, his very children were not permitted to visit him; and he was almost reduced to despair, when his earnest entreaties, seconded by the friendship of Cecil, and some of the other ministers, procured his release from an intolerable bondage.¶

To sir Amias Paulet, one of the gentlemen to whom the royal prisoner was afterwards committed, Elizabeth seems to have given a much more explicit intimation of her wishes. Paulet had entered into the royal association for bringing to punishment all pretenders to the throne who should attempt her life; and she seemed to

* Letters from Shrewsbury to lord Burghley, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 244. 270. 272.
† Letter from Leicester to Shrewsbury, ibid., vol. ii. p. 253.
‡ Letter from the earl of Shrewsbury, ibid. p. 275. § Ibid.
‖ Letter from Shrewsbury to the queen, ibid. p. 246.
¶ Letter from Shrewsbury to lord Burghley, ibid., vol. ii. p. 247. Letter from the same, p. 248.

expect that he would rid her of her enemy, without subjecting her to the necessity, which she so earnestly wished to avoid, of actually signing the death-warrant.* This gentleman refused to be her instrument in so base a deed, which she would have both disavowed and punished; and no other course remained but to authorise the execution of the sentence against Mary: but Elizabeth affected the utmost reluctance to a step which her parliament and people, who heartily hated and dreaded the queen of Scots, so earnestly pressed. To such a length were her hopes of deceiving mankind by this duplicity carried, that, even after having deliberately signed the warrant, and delivered it to Davison, her secretary of state, she pretended, on hearing that it was actually executed, the utmost astonishment, grief, and indignation. Loudly accusing the secretary of having surreptitiously sent off the warrant, in direct opposition to her inclination, she caused the unfortunate man to be subjected, on this charge, to a heavy fine, which she levied, to his utter ruin.

If the part which Cecil bore in these transactions has brought censure on his memory, it brought no less unhappiness on his mind. His opinion respecting the queen of Scots, and the manner of her treatment, coincided with those of his colleagues in office. While he looked on her as the most dangerous enemy of his sovereign and his religion, he considered her liberty, and even her life, as scarcely compatible with the safety of either. Yet her confinement freed him neither from anxiety nor danger; his vigilance was incessantly occupied in counteracting the plots of her partisans, which aimed to involve himself and his queen in one destruction. Mary even proved a source of disquietude to him, in a way which he could least have expected. Having, from motives of humanity, obtained Elizabeth's reluctant consent that the captive queen, whose health had suffered much from confinement, should be carried to

* Secretary Davison's Apology, in Camden's Annals, p. 545.

Buxton Wells for her recovery *, he happened, during her stay there, to visit the same place for the relief of his own complaints. His jealous sovereign, connecting this accidental meeting with his frequent applications to mitigate the severities practised against Mary (for he was averse to all unnecessary harshness), conceived the strange suspicion that he had a private understanding with the queen of Scots, and had repaired to Buxton for the purpose of maturing some treacherous project.† Nor was this chimerical surmise the transient apprehension of a moment. On his return to court, he was charged by Elizabeth with this imaginary intrigue, in terms most injurious to his tried fidelity; and he found it prudent to decline a match between his daughter and the son of the earl of Shrewsbury, the keeper of Mary, and the supposed agent in their secret negotiations.‡

But while thus strangely suspected by Elizabeth, Cecil was, above all others, obnoxious to the partisans of Mary. Having been the chief means of discovering and overthrowing the conspiracies of Norfolk, he was reproached as the cause of that popular nobleman's death; though the repetition of the duke's treasonable attempts, after he had once been pardoned, seemed to render him no fit object of royal clemency. To consider Cecil as his private enemy seems altogether unfair. He was instrumental in procuring the pardon of Norfolk after his first offence; he endeavoured, by salutary counsels, to dissuade him from the prosecution of his pernicious schemes; and, in some of his writings, which still remain, he laments the infatuation of his grace, which rendered all good subjects his public enemies, however they might respect his private virtues.§ Yet the whole odium of Norfolk's death was thrown on him; and the general reproach was countenanced by the unblushing duplicity of Elizabeth. That princess, though

* Letter from Cecil to Shrewsbury, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 111.
† Ibid. p. 130. ‡ Ibid.
§ Camden, p. 255. Lloyd's State Worthies, p. 540. Burleigh's Meditation on the Reign of Elizabeth, &c.

she had authorised the execution without any reluctance, was anxious to have it believed that she had only yielded to the importunities of Cecil. The minister was, for some time after, treated as a person who had deluded her into an act repugnant to her nature; and he was not received again into her presence and favour until she thought that appearances were sufficiently satisfied. But he had yet to connect a private and deeper affliction with the fate of Norfolk. One of Cecil's daughters was unfortunately married to a profligate husband, the earl of Oxford: that young nobleman, much attached to Norfolk, threatened his father-in-law, that, unless he would undertake to procure the duke's pardon, he would do all in his power to ruin his daughter. This threat he executed with inhuman punctuality: and after having deserted her bed, and squandered his fortune in the most abandoned courses, he brought, by a train of barbarous usage, his innocent victim to an untimely grave.*

The selfish Elizabeth felt no remorse in attempting to load Cecil with the odium of the execution of Mary, as well as of Norfolk. He appears to have had no greater share in advising it than the other ministers: but as he was accounted a principal enemy of the queen of Scots, Elizabeth judged that an imputation against him would be most readily received; and, with this ungenerous view, she banished him from her presence, and treated him with all the harshness due to an unfaithful counsellor. Cecil appears, on this occasion, to have been seriously alarmed; ministers were not, in that age, protected against the crown, and the misfortunes of secretary Davison, then passing before his eyes, proved to him that, if Elizabeth should account a further sacrifice necessary for her purposes, little was to be expected either from her justice or gratitude. But, as the sincerity of her indignation had been testified sufficiently for political purposes by the ruin of Davison, and as the services of Cecil were too useful to be dispensed

* Dugdale's Baronage, vol. ii. p. 169

with, she suffered herself to be at length mollified, and received him again into favour.*

We have now taken a survey of the part acted by Cecil in regard to religion, to domestic and to foreign policy. A striking characteristic, and one hardly ever possessed to an equal degree by other statesmen, was a uniformity in his plans, the result of a mind always cool and deliberate, seldom blinded by prejudice, and never precipitated by passion. On some occasions we may dissent from his opinion, and in a few we may suspect the qualities of his heart; but, in general, we must allow that the measures which Elizabeth pursued in opposition to his sentiments were the chief defects of her government; while those which she adopted in conformity to his counsels produced the boasted prosperity and glory of her reign.

It has long since been observed, that the most successful statesman is scarcely an object of envy; that his pre-eminence is dearly purchased by unceasing disquietudes, and that his honours are an inadequate compensation for his mortifications and dangers. While nations, like individuals, are liable to be agitated by violent passions, and misled by false views of interest, the advocate of moderation and peace is often the object of popular reproach. Such was not unfrequently the case of Cecil. So wildly were the minds of men possessed with the prospect of military glory and Mexican gold, that his opposition to the continuance of the Spanish war subjected him even to personal danger from the populace. The more violent among the clergy, because he attempted to restrain their persecuting spirit, reviled him as a puritan in disguise, as a secret enemy to the church; while the more zealous dissenters were no less suspicious of his endeavours to persuade them into conformity. From his supposed influence in public affairs, the enemies of government were also his personal enemies. The friends of Mary queen of Scots, and the partisans of the popish religion, regarded him as their capital foe;

* Strype's Annals, vol. iii. p. 370.

and not satisfied with incessantly defaming him by libels, they attempted more than once to take him off by assassination. In one of these attempts, for which two assassins were executed, the Spanish ambassador was suspected to have been concerned, and was, in consequence, ordered to depart the kingdom.

His influence with Elizabeth exposed him to equal hatred from the majority of the courtiers. The earl of Leicester was at the head of all the intrigues against him, and made, on one occasion, a bold effort to accomplish his ruin. In concert with the principal courtiers, he planned that Cecil should be unexpectedly accused before the privy council, arrested without the knowledge of the queen, and immediately sent to the Tower. When thus removed from the queen's presence, abundance of accusations, it was imagined, might be procured to elicit her consent to his trial and condemnation.* This plot had nearly reached its accomplishment, and Cecil was resisting his accusers in the privy council with very little effect, when Elizabeth, who had been privately informed of the design, suddenly entered the room, and addressed, to the astonished counsellors, one of those appalling reprimands which were more distinguished for vigour than delicacy.†

As a compensation for these disquietudes, and a recompense for his services, we should not be surprised to find Cecil loaded with the favours of his sovereign. But that princess was proverbially frugal of her rewards. Her love of economy was frequently carried to a blameable excess, and her confidential ministers abridged of the means to serve her with advantage. There remain various letters of sir Francis Walsingham, complaining of his being wholly unable, on his scanty appointments, to support his establishment, though very inadequate to his quality of ambassador in France.‡ Other ministers had equal reason for complaint; and there were many more fortunes spent than made in her service. In the

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 19. † Camden's Annals Eliz.
‡ Harleian MSS. in British Museum, No. 260.

distribution of honours her frugality was no less conspicuous, and could be ascribed only to sound policy, uninfluenced by meaner motives. Aware that titles, unless accounted indicative of real merit in those on whom they were bestowed, would cease to confer distinction, she distributed them with a careful and sparing hand; and the honours of the earl of Leicester afford perhaps a solitary instance, in her reign, of a title acquired without desert. A title from Elizabeth was consequently a real reward, and was deemed an adequate retribution for the most important services.

If Cecil was better rewarded than the other ministers, we must own that his claims were greater; and we shall find that the favours which he received were neither hastily bestowed, nor carried beyond his merits. In consequence of his efforts in repressing the rebellion which attended the duke of Norfolk's first conspiracy, he was created a baron, the highest title he ever attained. The other favours which he received, consisting in official situations, could hardly be denominated rewards, since they brought him additional business, which he executed with punctuality and diligence. After concluding the treaty of Edinburgh, he was appointed master of the wards, an office in virtue of which he had to preside in the court of wards, and to determine a variety of questions between the sovereign and the subject. Eleven years afterwards, lord Burleigh (such was his new title) was raised to the office of lord high treasurer, which, along with great dignity, brought him an immense addition of complicated business. An accumulation of offices in the hands of one man naturally led to much envy, and was certainly a very blameable precedent; but the fidelity and ability with which he executed their duties must, in his case, alleviate the censure of posterity.

Lord Burleigh continued minister during a period of unexampled length, and in an age when men in office were exposed to the rudest assaults of faction and intrigue. To investigate the means by which he main-

tained his station cannot fail to be instructive, devoid as they were of the craft and subtlety so frequently connected with the name of politician. The arts to which he owed his success were not less honourable than skilful, and would have raised him to influence and reputation in the walks of private life. For nothing was he more remarkable than for his unremitting diligence and scrupulous punctuality. Whatever the engagements of others, whether the pursuit of pleasure or the cabals of the court, Burleigh was always found at his post, intensely occupied with the duties of office and the cares of government. A young courtier of those times, while describing the intrigues with which all around him were busied, observes, "My lord treasurer, even after the old manner, dealeth with matters of state only, and beareth himself very uprightly."* The degree of his industry may be estimated from its effects, which were altogether wonderful. As principal secretary of state, and for a considerable time as sole secretary, he managed a great proportion of the public business, both foreign and domestic: he conducted negotiations, planned expeditions, watched over the machinations of internal enemies, employed private sources of intelligence, assisted at the deliberations of the privy council and parliament, and wrote many tracts on the state of affairs. When created lord high treasurer, his concern with the general affairs of government continued, while he had, moreover, to attend to the receipts and disbursements of the nation, to devise means for replenishing the treasury, and to sit occasionally in the court of Exchequer, as judge between the people and the officers of the revenue. As master of the court of wards, he had much judicial occupation during term; for his equitable decisions brought before him an unusual accumulation of suits. Nor did he neglect those numerous petitions with which he was perpetually importuned, some demanding the reward of services, others imploring the redress of

* Letter from Gilbert Talbot to the Earl of Shrewsbury, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 100.

injuries; and, amidst all these avocations, his private affairs were managed with the same precision as those of the state.

All this load of business he was enabled, by assiduous application and exact method, to despatch without either hurry or confusion. In conformity to his favourite maxim, that "the shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at once," he finished each branch of business before he proceeded to another, and never left a thing undone with the view of recurring to it at a period of more leisure. In the courts where he presided, he despatched as many causes in one term as his predecessors in a twelvemonth.* When pressed with an accumulation of affairs, which frequently happened, he rather chose to encroach on the moderate intervals usually allowed to his meals and his sleep, than to omit any part of his task. Even when labouring under pain, and in danger of increasing his malady, he frequently caused himself to be carried to his office for the despatch of business. An eye-witness assures us that, during a period of twenty-four years, he never saw him idle for half an hour together†; and if he had no particular task to execute, which rarely happened, he would still busy himself in reading, writing, or meditating.‡ By incessant practice, he acquired a facility and despatch which seemed altogether wonderful to idle courtiers; it proved of incalculable advantage to government, and to himself it gave a decided superiority over his less industrious rivals.

Next to his unequalled diligence and punctuality we are to rank his invincible reserve, whenever reserve was necessary. While he avoided that system of deception by which statesmen have so often undertaken to gain their ends, he succeeded in concealing his real views, by the mere maintenance of a guarded secrecy. Perfectly impenetrable to the dexterous agents who were employed to sound him, his unaltered countenance and unembar-

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 21.
† Ibid. p. 24.
‡ Ibid. p. 65.

rassed motions afforded no means to divine the impressions produced on him by any communications. Equally hopeless was the attempt to arrive at his political secrets by procuring access to his most intimate friends; for he had no confidants.* "Attempts," he said, "are most likely to succeed when planned deliberately, carried secretly, and executed speedily." †

The resolution with which he could persevere in his reserve was remarkably exemplified in his silence with respect to the succession to the throne. Three rival families at that time claimed this splendid inheritance,—the houses of Suffolk and Hastings, and the royal line of Scotland: the title of either might have been rendered preferable by an act of parliament. But Burleigh saw the danger of declaring in favour of one or other. All were at present restrained from improper attempts by their expectations; but if the intentions of the queen were once known, the disappointed families might be apt to embrace those violent measures from which alone they could then hope for success. He determined, therefore, to maintain a profound silence on this delicate question; and the queen, probably in consequence of his counsels, adopted and persevered in the same resolution, in spite of all the remonstrances with which she was assailed. The parliament often attempted to force a disclosure of her sentiments, and she and her minister found much difficulty in eluding their importunities; yet Burleigh carried his opinion with him to the grave, and Elizabeth disclosed hers only on her death-bed.

No statesman was ever more distinguished for self-command and moderation. Collected, calm, and energetic in the most critical emergencies, he bore adversity without any signs of dejection, and prosperity without any apparent elevation.‡ Yet his coolness had in it nothing repulsive; and his self-command was chiefly exerted in repressing angry emotions. In council, he was always the strenuous advocate of moderate and con-

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 64. † Ibid., p. 69.
‡ Ibid. p. 30.

ciliating measures*; and it was his particular boast that, notwithstanding the extent of his private as well as his public transactions, he had never sued nor been sued by any man.† He bore the attacks of his opponents without any appearance of resentment; and, in due season, embraced opportunities to promote their interest. When the earl of Leicester, who had always thwarted his measures, and often calumniated his character, at length fell under the queen's displeasure, Burleigh successfully exerted himself to prevent his total loss of favour.‡ Nor did he hesitate to form a cordial reconciliation with sir Nicholas Throgmorton, who had long been one of his most dangerous enemies, and who had desisted from his practices only when he found Burleigh's power too firmly established to be shaken. Although Essex was his avowed and turbulent opponent, yet, when Elizabeth refused some just claim of that nobleman, the lord treasurer supported his cause with so much firmness, that the enraged queen at length bestowed on him some of those vehement epithets by which she made her courtiers feel her displeasure.§ It was observed that he never spoke harshly of his enemies, nor embraced any opportunity of revenge; and as he was no less on his guard to avoid every undue bias from affection, it became a general remark that he was a better enemy than a friend.‖ "I entertain," he said, "malice against no individual whatever; and I thank God that I never retired to rest out of charity with any man."¶

Burleigh possessed great discernment in selecting, and great zeal in recommending, men of talent for public employments. He seemed resolved that England should be distinguished above all nations for the integrity of her judges, the piety of her divines, and the sagacity of her

* "Win hearts," he was accustomed to say to the queen, "and you have their hands and purses." *Rushworth's Collections*, vol. i. p. 469.
† Bacon's Works, vol. iv. p. 372.
‡ Letter of Lord Burghley in the Earl of Hardwicke's Miscellaneous State Papers, vol. i. p. 329.
§ Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 147.
‖ Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 59. ¶ Ibid.

ambassadors.* It was he who discovered and brought into office sir Francis Walsingham, so much distinguished among the ministers of Elizabeth for acuteness of penetration, extensive knowledge of public affairs, and profound acquaintance with human nature. The department of foreign affairs was long almost exclusively under the management of Burleigh; and there is perhaps no period in the history of England in which her intercourse with other countries was committed to such able hands, and in which her ambassadors confessedly excelled those of other nations in diplomatic talents. By this attention to merit and neglect of interest, the treasurer naturally incurred much obloquy from those whom his penetration caused him to neglect: the nobility, in particular, expressed high displeasure at the preference so often given to commons, and seemed to think that offices which they could not execute, like honours which they had not earned, should be entailed on them and their descendants.

Cecil was never the advocate of compulsory or arbitrary measures. Open discussion, far from being attended with danger, was, in his opinion, the most effectual and innocent means of expending the fury of faction: a forced silence seemed to him only to concentre and aggravate popular resentment. In the courts where he presided, he never gave a judgment without explaining the grounds on which he proceeded †: in matters of state, he refused to give his opinion, unless where he might bring forward and debate the reasons on which it was founded.‡ His influence was thus increased by all the weight of reason, and he omitted no precaution to give it the sanction of impartiality. The solicitations of those who presumed most on his favour, from the ties of kindred or familiar acquaintance, he received with such coldness that they were carefully avoided by those who knew him best, and never by any one repeated. 'If the

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 46. 55.
† Ibid. p. 33.
‡ Ibid. p. 68.

cause of his friends was tried before him, he gave them rigid justice; if they sought preferment in the state, he did not obstruct their claims of merit: but he would listen to no application where partiality might blind his judgment, or blemish his integrity.*

In that age, the eyes of mankind were more strongly dazzled than at present by the splendour of rank; and a statesman was more likely to promote his views by attentions to the great. Yet, with Burleigh, the poor received equal measure with the wealthy, and had their suits as patiently heard, and as speedily determined. Each day in term, it was customary for him to receive from fifty to sixty petitions, all of which he commonly perused and weighed in the course of the evening or night, and was prepared to return an answer next morning, on his way to Westminster Hall. As soon as the petitioner mentioned his name, Burleigh found no difficulty in recollecting his business, and in delivering a reply. When at length confined to his bed by age and infirmities, and no longer able to attend at the courts, he directed that all petitions should be sent to him under seal; and as all were opened in the order in which they arrived, and answers immediately dictated, the lowest petitioner received his reply with the same despatch as the highest.†

The early and complete intelligence which Burleigh possessed with regard to secret transactions, both at home and abroad, was spoken of with wonder by his contemporaries, and enabled him to adopt the promptest measures for counteracting all hostile attempts. At a period when invasion from abroad, and conspiracy at home, agitated by artful intriguers and desperate bigots, it was no season to await, in careless slumber, the development of events: but while we admire the extent and happy effects of his intelligence, we must hesitate to applaud the methods by which it was occasionally procured, and consider them as excusable only from the necessity of his situation. Obliged to maintain a num-

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 58. † Ibid. p. 22, 23.

ber of spies, to reward informers, and to bribe accomplices to betray their associates, he might be condemned for resorting to nefarious arts, had they not been indispensable to the public safety, at a period when assassinations were so common, and when the doctrines of mental reservation, and of keeping no faith with heretics, were general tenets among the enemies of government.

Burleigh, by adhering inflexibly to the rule of living within his means, escaped those pecuniary embarrassments which often beset his less considerate colleagues. His income, considerable at an early age, became progressively increased by additional offices, and occasionally by the mercantile adventures which in these days were usual among men of rank and fortune. It is a curious fact, that he invested large sums in the purchase of lead, for the purpose of re-sale.* Still he was exempt not only from corruption, but from selfishness: for an avaricious man would have made more by his offices in seven years than he made in forty; and the splendour of his expenses was fully proportioned to his wealth and station.† So far, indeed, did he carry his disinterestedness, as never to raise his rents nor displace his tenants. As the lands were let when he bought them, so they still remained; and some of his tenants continued to enjoy for 20*l.* a year what might have been leased for 200*l.*‡

The magnificence of his mode of life is to be ascribed partly to policy, but more to the manners of the age, which, as we have seen in the case of the modest and unambitious More, made the expense of the great consist chiefly in a number of retainers. Burleigh had four places of residence, at each of which he maintained an establishment, his family and suite amounting to nearly a hundred persons. His domestic expenses at his house in London were calculated at forty or fifty pounds a week when he was present, and about thirty

* Letter from Gilbert Talbot to the Earl of Shrewsbury, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 211.

† Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 43.

‡ Ibid. p. 54, 55.

in his absence; princely allowances, when we consider the value of money at that period. His stables cost him a thousand marks a year; his servants were remarked for the richness of their liveries. Retaining an appendage of ancient magnificence, which had now been given up, unless by a few noblemen of the first rank and fortune, he kept a regular table, with a certain number of covers for gentlemen, and two others for persons of inferior condition. These, always open, were served alike whether he was present or absent; and, in correspondence with this proud hospitality, he had around him many young persons of distinction, who acted as his retainers, and lived in his family. Promotion was not yet attainable by open competition; the house of a minister was the grand preparatory school; and Burleigh was under Elizabeth what cardinal Morton had been under Henry VII. Among the retainers of Burleigh, there could, we are told, be reckoned, at one time, twenty young gentlemen, each of whom possessed, or was likely to possess, an income of 1000*l.*; and among his household officers there were persons who had property to the amount of 10,000*l.** His houses were not large, but his equipage and furniture were splendid; his plate is reported to have amounted to 14,000 pounds in weight, and about 40,000*l.* in value. His public entertainments corresponded with this magnificence. It was customary for Elizabeth to receive sumptuous entertainments from her principal nobility and ministers; and, on these instances of condescension, Burleigh omitted nothing which could show his sense of the honour conferred on him by his royal guest. Besides the short private visits which she often paid him, he entertained her in a formal manner twelve different times, with festivities which lasted several weeks, and on each occasion cost him two or three thousand pounds. His seat at Theobalds, during her stay, exhibited a succession of plays, sports,

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 40. The writer of the treatise from which these particulars are taken was himself one of lord Burghley's retainers, and an eye-witness of all these circumstances.

and splendid devices; and here she received foreign ambassadors, at the expense of her treasurer, in as royal state as at any of her palaces.* This magnificence, doubtless, acquired him a considerable ascendancy both at court and among the people; but it was attended with much envy, and often brought him vexation. At his death, he left, besides his plate and furniture, 11,000*l.* in money, and 4000*l.* a year in lands, of which he had received only a small portion by inheritance.†

We come next to the interesting topic of his conduct towards Elizabeth, and the deportment of her majesty in return. He was often heard to say, that he thought there never was a woman so wise in all respects as Elizabeth; that she knew the state of her own and foreign countries better than all her counsellors; that, in the most difficult deliberations, she would surprise the wisest by the superiority of her expedients.‡ His services, both before and after her elevation to the throne, were of the most important nature; for, besides his great qualities as a minister, his vigilance had repeatedly preserved her life, while his fidelity had endangered his own.

These services were sincerely felt by Elizabeth: with a magnanimity not always to be found among princes, she freely acknowledged her obligations, and demonstrated her gratitude by attentions which, from a sovereign, were the most flattering of rewards. Interesting herself in his domestic concerns, and entering into the joys and sorrows of his family, we find her at one time standing sponsor for one of his children, and at another hastening in person to enquire for his daughter in a sudden illness. In promoting the marriage of his son with a lady of rank and fortune, she also took an active part, and visited the lady in behalf of the suitor. Although extremely jealous of her real authority, Elizabeth had too much sense as well

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 37—41. These protracted visits of Elizabeth to her principal courtiers seem to have had in view economy as well as popularity. She had no objection to honour her subjects by her presence, and she accounted it fair that they should pay for this honour.

† Ibid. p. 44.

‡ Ibid. p. 71.

as policy to impede her service by unmeaning forms. When the treasurer, in the latter part of his life, was much afflicted with the gout, the queen always made him sit down in her presence with some obliging expression, "My lord," she would say, "we make use of you, not for your bad legs, but for your good head." When the severity of his illness rendered him unable to quit his apartment, she repaired thither with her council to enjoy the benefit of his advice; and when his disease assumed a dangerous aspect, she appeared in person among the anxious enquirers for his health.*

Her majesty was, however, far from being always so accommodating; and it often required no small degree of patience to bear the effects of her violent passions and unreasonable caprice. The manners of that age were much less refined than those of the present; yet, even then, it appeared no ordinary breach of decorum in a queen to load her attendants with the coarsest epithets, or to vent her indignation in blows. The style of gallantry with which she encouraged her courtiers to approach her, both cherished this overbearing temper, and made her excesses be received rather as the ill-humour of a mistress than the affronts of a sovereign. It was customary for her statesmen and warriors to pretend not only loyalty to her throne, but ardent attachment to her person; and in some of Raleigh's letters, we find her addressed, at the age of sixty, with all the enthusiastic rapture of a fond lover.† To feign a dangerous distemper arising from the influence of her charms was deemed an effectual passport to her favour; and when she appeared displeased, the forlorn courtier took to his bed in a paroxysm of amorous despondency, and breathed out his tender melancholy in sighs and protestations. We find Leicester, and some other ministers, endeavouring to introduce one Dyer to her favour; and the means which they employed was, to persuade her that a consumption, from which the young man had with difficulty recovered,

* Birch's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 294. 128. Lloyd's State Worthies.
† Cayley's Life of Raleigh, p. 127. 134. 4to. edit.

was brought on by the despair with which she had inspired him.* Essex, having on one occasion fallen under her displeasure, became exceedingly ill, and could be restored to health only by her sending him some broth, with kind wishes for his recovery. Raleigh, hearing of these attentions to his political rival, got sick in his turn, and received no benefit from any medicine till the same sovereign remedy was applied. With courtiers who submitted to act the part of sensitive admirers, Elizabeth found herself under no restraint: she expected from them the most unlimited compliance, and if they proved refractory, she gave herself up to all the fury of passion, and loaded them opprobrious epithets.

Burleigh, by uniformly approaching her with the dignified demeanour of a grave and reserved counsellor, was far less liable to such indignities. Yet even on him she sometimes vented her chagrin; and, in moments of sudden violence, seemed to forget his age, his character, and his station. On one occasion, when, in opposition to her wish, he persisted in a resolution to quit the court a few days for the benefit of his health, she petulantly called him a froward old fool†; and when he ventured, as already has been mentioned, to maintain some claim of the earl of Essex, which she had determined to disallow, she wrathfully reproached him as a miscreant and a coward who deserted her cause.‡ As he had generally to perform the disagreeable task of announcing to her any untoward accidents in the course of her affairs, he was exposed to the first ebullitions of her chagrin; and so much, we are told, did the unprosperous event of her plans for the tranquillisation of Ireland, in 1594, irritate her mind, that she severely reproached her aged minister even while he laboured under sickness.§ But it was not only hasty bursts of passion that he had to dread: we have seen that, on particular occasions, she chose to execute her designs under a veil of consummate hypocrisy;

* Letter of Gilbert Talbot to the Earl of Shrewsbury, in Lodge, vol. ii. p. 101.
† Birch's Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. p. 448.
‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 148.
§ Ibid. vol. i. p. 169.

and made no scruple to shield herself from public reproach by affecting resentment against her ministers for the very acts which had given her the highest gratification. Fortunately for Burleigh, she found means to satisfy appearances, without carrying her injustice to him beyond some temporary indignities.

These mortifications were aggravated by the obstinacy with which she occasionally opposed his designs. While certain counsellors, from attractions of person and manner, acquired at times an undue influence over her, some of her passions and prejudices were too powerful to be counteracted by his cool and rational suggestions; and it is alleged that she more than once rejected his counsels, merely to prove to him that his ascendancy over her was not absolute.

The even temper of Burleigh enabled him to suffer many of these disgusts with apparent calmness; yet at times they exceeded his endurance. A very few years after the accession of Elizabeth, we find him already desiring to quit a station in which his toil and mortification were so great.* As he advanced in life, his increasing bodily infirmities, and some domestic misfortunes which affected him very deeply, made such causes of chagrin more poignant; and he frequently solicited the queen to accept of his resignation. But that princess, though too impetuous to refrain from giving offence, could not endure to be deprived of the zeal, industry, and wisdom on which she had so long relied with the most prosperous issue; and his resignation was a theme to which she could never be brought to listen. Laying aside the stateliness of the queen, she undertook to alter his purpose and dispel his chagrin, by assuming the playfulness of the woman. There still remain several of her letters, in which she so artfully mingles strokes of gratitude and attachment with raillery, that it is no wonder the old statesman should have been moved by these indications of warm interest from his sovereign.†

* Letter in Hardwicke's Miscellaneous State Papers, vol. i. p. 170.
† Strype's Annals, vol. iv. p. 77.

The private life of Burleigh may be discussed in a short compass. Hurried along, from an early period of life, amidst affairs too complicated not to require his utmost industry, too important not to engage all his attention, he had very little leisure for domestic enjoyments. His hours of relaxation were few, seldom exceeding what was necessary for the refreshment of nature; and if he at any time indulged in a greater cessation from his public labours, it was chiefly when his bodily infirmities demanded such an intermission with a call not to be refused.

The principal scene of his amusements was his seat at Theobalds, near London, whither he fled with eagerness to enjoy the short intervals of leisure which he could snatch from public affairs. In these days the buildings had not extended so far; the house was surrounded with gardens, on which he had expended large sums of money, which were laid out under his own direction, with taste and magnificence. Here he was often seen riding up and down the walks on his mule, enjoying the progress of his improvements, or overlooking those who amused themselves by shooting with arrows or playing at bowls; but he never joined in these or any other diversions. The weakness of his constitution, and more especially the distempers of his feet and legs, disqualified him for active sports, even if he had been led to them by inclination: but his mind seems to have been so thoroughly engrossed by important business, that he had as little relish as leisure for amusements; nor did he play at any of those games with which the less busy endeavour to relieve the languor of existence.*

His principal and favourite recreation was reading. Books were to him what cards are to a great portion of the world, — his frequent and most valued resource. They frequently interfered with the exercise necessary to his health; for when he got home to take a morning's ride, if he found a book which pleased him, he willingly

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 61.

postponed his excursion.* Nor was he insensible to the pleasures of domestic society and exhilarating conversation. At his table, in the company of a few select friends, or of his children and kinsmen, whom he always loved to see around him, he appeared to throw all his cares aside, and to yield himself up to unrestrained enjoyment. Whatever fatigue or anxiety, in the course of the day, his mind might have experienced from the pressure of public affairs, every uneasy circumstance seemed at these periods to be forgotten. His countenance was cheerful, his conversation lively; and those who saw him only in these short intervals of relaxation would have imagined that pleasure was the business of his life. As the mildness of his demeanour towards all ranks, in the intercourse of public life, procured him many friends, the frankness and familiarity which he displayed in his private circle gave a relish to his society. His conversation often sparkled with wit and gaiety, and his observations were generally not less pleasant than shrewd. The topics discussed at his table were various; literary conversation was preferred, politics were always avoided.† The magnificent style in which he lived, the number of his attendants, and the concourse of persons of distinction, seem, at first, adverse to the freedom of his social entertainments. But Burleigh was accustomed to live in a crowd; and few of his visitors were so exalted above him by rank that he could not with grace relax himself in their presence.

A share in conversation was the chief pleasure which he enjoyed at table; for he was distinguished for temperance in an age when that virtue was not common. He ate sparingly, partook of few dishes, never drank above thrice at a meal, and very seldom of wine. Although the

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 63, 64. It is curious to hear the peevishness with which learning is often cried down, even by those who derive from it the principal pleasures of their life. Though Burleigh found nearly all his recreation in books, in a letter to the earl of Shrewsbury, he wishes that nobleman's son "all the good education that may be mete to teach him to fear God, love his natural father, and to know his friends, *without any curiosity of human learning*, which, without the fear of God, doth great hurt to all youth in this time and age."—*Lodge*, vol. ii. p. 133.

† Ibid. p. 62, 63.

dinner hour in that age was not later than twelve or one o'clock, it was not uncommon with him to refrain from supper.* The gout, with which he was grievously tormented in the latter part of his life, probably contributed to render him more cautiously abstemious: if his temperance failed to banish this uneasy guest, he never at least encouraged its stay by rich wines and strong spices.†

Nor was the private life of Burleigh destitute of nobler virtues. At a period when the poor had so few resources for their industry, and when many willing to work were reduced to want, a portion of his ample fortune was benevolently appropriated to their necessities. His certain and regular alms amounted to 500*l.* a year, besides farther and large disbursements on extraordinary occasions. Part was employed, under proper superintendence, in affording relief to poor prisoners, or in releasing honest debtors; the rest was confided to the management of certain parishes for the use of their most destitute inhabitants. From the low state of husbandry at that period, and the very limited intercourse between nations, one bad season was sufficient to subject a kingdom to the miseries of famine; corn, in certain districts, was sold at the most exorbitant prices, and rendered as inaccessible to the poorer classes as if none had existed in the country. In such times of scarcity, then of frequent occurrence, and attended with consequences revolting to humanity, it was usual for Burleigh to buy up large quantities of corn, which he sold at low prices to the poor in the neighbourhood of his different seats; and by this well-judged assistance, relieved their necessities without relaxing their industry.‡

The mind of Burleigh appears to have been strongly tinctured with piety. Placed amidst dangers which his utmost vigilance could not always avoid, and from which he often escaped by unexpected accidents, his views were naturally extended to that Power on whose will depended the duration of his life. His faith had been endeared to

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 62, 63.
† Nugæ Antiquæ, vol. ii. p. 82.
‡ Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 38. 42.

him by persecution; his piety was exalted by the sacrifice of his interest to religion. Regular in his attendance on public worship, and in the performance of his private devotions, he strove, both by example and influence, to inspire his family and connections with religious sentiments. During the greatest pressure of business, it was his custom, morning and evening, to attend prayers at the queen's chapel. When his increasing infirmities rendered him no longer able to go abroad, he caused a cushion to be laid by his bedside, and on his knees performed his devotions at the same regular hours. Unable at length to kneel, or to endure the fatigue of reading, he caused the prayers to be read aloud to him as he lay on his bed.* "I will trust," he said, "no man if he be not of sound religion; for he that is false to God can never be true to man."† The strictness of his morals was in correspondence with his piety, and both had a powerful effect in confirming his fortitude in times of peril. At the awful period when Philip was preparing his armada, and when the utter destruction of the English government was confidently expected abroad, and greatly dreaded at home, Burleigh was uniformly collected and resolute; and when the mighty preparations of the Spaniards were spoken of in his presence with apprehension, he replied with firmness, "They shall do no more than God will suffer them."‡

In his intercourse with his family and dependants, this grave statesman was kind and condescending. In his leisure moments he delighted in sporting with his children, forbearing, however, such indications of intemperate fondness as might have rendered them regardless of his authority, and ready to give the rein to their caprices. In his old age no scene so much delighted him as to have his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, collected around his table, and testifying their happiness by their good-humour and cheerfulness.§ While his eldest son passed into the rank of hereditary

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 56.
† Ibid. p. 68.
‡ Ibid. p. 30.
§ Ibid. p. 60, 61

nobility, it was to his second son, Robert, that Burleigh turned an anxious eye as the heir of his talents and influence. Nor were his pains fruitlessly bestowed*: Robert displayed abilities worthy of his father; and after rising, during his lifetime, to considerable trusts and employments in the state, succeeded him, under James I., as prime minister, under the title of earl of Salisbury. The care with which Burleigh watched over the interests of this son appears from a series of prudential advices arranged in ten divisions, which he drew up for his use.†

For the improvement of his children, as well as for his own domestic happiness, Burleigh was chiefly indebted to his wife, the daughter of sir Anthony Cook, a lady highly distinguished for her mental accomplishments. The plan of female education, which the example of sir Thomas More had rendered popular, continued to be pursued among the superior classes of the community. The learned languages, which, in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, still contained every thing elegant in literature, formed an indispensable branch of a fashionable education; and many young ladies of rank could not only translate the authors of Greece and Rome, but even compose in Greek and Latin with considerable elegance. Sir Anthony Cook, a man eminent for his literary acquirements, and on that account appointed tutor to Edward VI., bestowed the most careful education on his five daughters; and all of them rewarded his exertions, by becoming not only proficients in literature, but distinguished for their excellent demeanour as mothers of families. Lady Burleigh was adorned with every quality which could excite love and esteem; and many instances are recorded of her piety and beneficence. She had accompanied her husband through all the vicissitudes of his fortunes; and an affectionate union of forty-three years rendered the loss of her the severest calamity of his life. The despondency caused to him by this irre-

* Bacon's Works, vol. i. p. 376.

† This tract has been transmitted to posterity; and as it affords so many characteristic traits of its author, it is inserted, for the information and entertainment of the reader, in the Appendix.

parable calamity produced a desire to renounce public business, so irksome in that state of his feelings, and to devote the remainder of his life to retirement and meditation. But Elizabeth was too sensible of the vast importance of his counsels. She peremptorily rejected the resignation which he tendered, yet softened her refusal with those arts which she knew so well to employ.

But though Burleigh continued to apply himself with undiminished vigour to public business, his happiness had sustained a loss which nothing could repair. In his wife he had been deprived of a companion whose society long habit had rendered essential to his enjoyment; while the increasing severity of the gout, with other infirmities of age, aggravated the distress of his mind by the pains of his body. By no trait had he hitherto been more remarkable than by the unruffled calmness of his temper. The serenity of his countenance seemed to indicate a tranquillity so confirmed as to be incapable of interruption; and an eye-witness informs us that, for thirty years together, he was seldom seen moved with joy in prosperity, or with sorrow in adversity.* But in the latter years of his life this consummate self-command began to forsake him. Business became more irksome as strength decreased, and the success with which his antagonists thwarted his pacific counsels gave him infinite pain, as they seemed likely to undo all the national advantages which it had been the labour of his life to procure. His temper now became so unfortunately altered, that he, who had been so eminent for coolness, sometimes gave way to passion, in opposition to every dictate of discretion.† In a conversation with M. Fouquerolles, an envoy from Henry IV., something which occurred so transported him with passion, that he broke out into the most vehement invectives against that monarch.‡ His intercourse with his servants, which had been uniformly placid and cheerful, was now frequently interrupted by

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 43.
† Birch's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 165.
‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 328.

sudden bursts of peevishness: but, on such occasions, he immediately recollected himself; appeared sensible of the injustice of injuring those who could not retaliate; and endeavoured, by assuming a peculiar complacency in his words and looks, or by studiously devising some acts of kindness, to make reparation for the pain which he had unadvisedly caused.*

Various indications of declining health now began to assail the aged statesman. Still he continued assiduous at his post, and laboured to rescue his countrymen from those delusive hopes of military glory and plunder, in pursuit of which they threatened to exhaust all their solid resources. The last public measure which he accomplished was the conclusion of an advantageous treaty with Holland: and he closed his long and useful labours in the council with an earnest but ineffectual effort to persuade them to negotiate with Spain. He died on the 4th of August, 1598, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, having held the station of prime minister of England for the long period of forty years, and assisted in the conduct of public affairs for upwards of half a century. His death-bed was surrounded by friends whom he esteemed, by children for whose future welfare he had provided, by servants devoted to him from a long interchange of good offices; and he expired with the utmost serenity and composure.†

The death of Burleigh was a cause of general sorrow. Elizabeth deeply lamented the loss of a minister in whose exertions she had found security and success during her whole reign: and the clouds which overhung the close of her career must often have renewed her regret for the want of her wise and faithful counsellor. A minister who opposes the multitude in the pursuit of an object on which their heated imaginations have fixed, is sure, at the moment, to be exposed to reproach. Such was the situation of Burleigh at the period of his death. In the face of popular clamour, he continued

* Life of William Lord Burghley, p. 49. † Ibid p. 63.

to deprecate a war which was no longer necessary for the public safety, and which wasted the wealth of the nation to gratify the pride or avarice of individuals. The earl of Essex, who still stood at the head of his antagonists, was the idol of the people; and they fondly contrasted the high spirit, the love of glory, the courageous sentiments of this young nobleman with what they termed the cold, cautious, illiberal policy of the aged Burleigh. Yet his death caused more regret than satisfaction, even among the unthinking multitude. They felt themselves deprived of a guardian, under whose vigilant protection they had long reposed and prospered; and there remained no statesman of equal experience to guide their affairs, at a time when the decay of Elizabeth, and a disputed succession, threatened the nation with many calamities. The lapse of time has long since removed those circumstances which elevated the hopes and inflamed the passions of his contemporaries; the merits of Burleigh have been more justly estimated; and prosperity seems to concur in recognising him as the wisest minister of England.

APPENDIX

TO

THE LIFE OF LORD BURLEIGH.

THE EARL OF SUSSEX TO SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

" Good Mr. Secretary,

" Upon your request and promise, made in your letter of the 16th, I will write to you what by any means I conceive in this great matter; although the greatness of the cause, in respect of the person whose it is, the inconstancy and subtleness of the people with whom we deal, and the little account made always of my simple judgment, give me good occasion of silence. And, therefore, (unless it be to the queen's majesty, from whom I would not wish any thought of my heart to be hidden,) I look for a performance of your promise.

" The matter must at length take end, either by finding the Scottish queen guilty of the crimes that are objected against her, or by some manner of composition with a show of saving her honour. The first, I think, will hardly be attempted, for two causes. The one, for that if her adverse party accuse her of the murder, by producing of her letters, she will deny them, and accuse the most of them of manifest consent to the murder, hardly to be denied; so as, upon the trial on both sides, her proofs will judicially fall best out, it is thought. The other, for that their young king is of tender and weak years, and state of body; and if God should call him, and their queen were judicially defaced and dishonoured, and her son, in respect of her wicked-

* This letter was written a few months after Mary's confinement in England; and the writer was, at the time, employed as one of the commissioners at York, to investigate the charges against her.

ness, admitted to the crown, Hamilton upon his death should succeed; which, as Murray's faction utterly detest, so, after her public defamation, they dare not, to avoid Hamilton, receive her again, for fear of revenge. And therefore, to avoid these great perils, they surely intend, so far as I can by any means discover, to labour a composition, wherein Lyddington was a dealer here, hath, by means, dealt with the Scottish queen, and will also, I think, deal there. And to that end I believe you shall shortly hear of Melvil there, who, I think, is the instrument between Murray, Lyddington, and their queen, to work this composition; whereunto I think surely both parties do incline, although diversely affected for private respects.

"The earl of Murray and his faction work that their queen would now willingly surrender to her son, after the example of Navarre; and procure the confirming of the regency in Murray; and therewith admit Hamilton and his faction to place of council, according to their states; and to remain in England herself, with her dowry of France: whereunto, I think, they would add a portion out of Scotland. And if she would agree to this, I think they would not only forbear to touch her in honour, but also deliver to her all matters that they have to charge her, and denounce her clear by parliament, and therewith put her in hope, not only to receive her again to her royal estate if her son die, but also, upon some proof of the forgetting of her displeasure, to procure in short time that she may be restored in her son's life, and he to give place to her for life: and if she will not surrender, it is thought Murray will allow of her restitution and abode in England, so as he may continue regent. The Hamiltons seek that the young king's authority should be disannulled; the hurts done on either side recompensed; and the queen restored to her crown, and to remain in Scotland. And yet, in respect of her misgovernment, they are contented that she should be governed by a council of the nobility of that realm, to be appointed here; in which council there should be no superior in authority or place appointed, but that every nobleman should hold his place according to his state; and that the queen's majesty should compose all differences from time to time amongst them. And to avoid all difference and peril, their queen should have

certain houses of no force; and a portion to maintain her estate: and the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dunbar, and other principal forts of the realm, to be delivered into the hands of upright noblemen, that leaned to no faction, to be sworn to hold them in sort to be prescribed; and that the whole nobility of Scotland should swear amity, and should testify the same under their hands and seals: and that the queen's majesty should take assurance for performance; and have the bringing up of the young prince in England, by nobility of England or Scotland, at her appointment. And, so as this might take effect, I think they might easily be induced to consent their queen should also remain in England, and have her dowry out of France and a portion out of Scotland, to maintain her state and her son's, in places to be appointed by the queen's majesty.

"Thus do you see how these two factions, for their private causes, toss between them the crown and public affairs of Scotland, and how near they be to agree if their private causes were not, and care neither for the mother nor the child (as I think, before God,) but to serve their own turns. Neither will Murray like of any order whereby he should not be regent styled; nor Hamilton of any order whereby he should not be as great, or greater in government than Murray. So as the government is presently the matter, whatsoever they say was heretofore the cause; and, therefore, it will be good we forget not our part in this tragedy.

"The opinion for the title to the crown, after the death of their queen and her son, is diversely carried, as the parties be affected to these two factions. The Hamiltons affirm the duke of Châtelherault to be the next heir by the laws. The other faction say that the young king, by his coronation and mother's surrender, is rightfully invested of the crown of Scotland; whereby his next heir in blood is, by the laws, next heir also to the crown; and thereby the duke avoided. The fear of this decree maketh Hamilton to withstand the king's title, for the surety of his own, and the regency of Murray, in respect of his claim to be governor, as next heir to the crown; for which causes it is likely Hamilton will hardly yield to the one or the other. And yet James Macgill, an assured man to Morton, talks with me secretly of this matter; and, defending the right

of the earl of Lennox's son, as next heir in blood to the young king, confessed to me that he thought, because it came by the mother, it must return by the mother's side, which was Hamilton: but it would put many men on horseback before it were performed, whereby you may see what leadeth in Scotland. There is some secret envy between Lyddington and Macgill; and, as I think, if they agree not by the way, you shall find Lyddington wholly bent to composition, and Macgill, of himself, otherwise inclined. If the queen's majesty would assure their defence, you may deal with them as you see cause.

"Thus far of that I have gathered by them; wherein, if they do not alter, I am sure I do not err. And now, touching my opinion of the matter, (not by way of advice, but as imparting to you what I conceive,) I think surely no end can be made good for England except the person of the Scottish queen be detained, by one means or other, in England. Of the two ends before written, I think to be best in all respects for the queen's majesty, if Murray will produce such matter as that the queen's majesty may, by virtue of her superiority over Scotland, find judicially the Scottish queen guilty of the murder of her husband, and therewith detain her in England, at the charges of Scotland, and allow of the crowning of the young king, and regency of Murray. Whereunto if Hamilton will submit himself, it were well done, for avoiding of his dependency upon France to receive him, with provision for indemnity of his title; and if he will not, then to assist Murray to prosecute him and his adherents by confiscation, &c. If this will not fall out sufficiently (as I doubt it will not), to determine judicially, if she deny her letters; then surely I think it best to proceed by composition, without show of any meaning to proceed to trial. And herein, as it shall be the surest way for the queen's majesty to procure the Scottish queen to surrender, &c., if that may be brought to pass; so, if she will by no means be induced to surrender, and will not end except she may be in some degree restored, then I think it fit to consider therein these matters following: —

"First, to provide for her and her son, to remain in England, at the charges of Scotland.

" Secondly, to maintain in strength and authority Murray's faction as much as may be, so as they oppress not unjustly Hamilton.

" Thirdly, to compose the causes between Murray and Hamilton, and their adherents, and to provide for Hamilton's indemnity in the matter of the title, to avoid his dependency upon France.

" Fourthly, that the queen's majesty order all differences that shall arise in Scotland; and, to that end, have security on both sides.

" Fifthly, if Hamilton will wilfully dissent from order, it is better to assist Murray in the prosecuting of Hamilton by confiscation, although he flee therefore to France, than to put Murray any ways in peril of weakening.

" And lastly, to foresee that these Scots on both sides pack not together, so as to unwrap (under colour of this composition) their mistress out of all present slander, purge her openly, show themselves satisfied with her abode here, and, within short time after, either by reconcilement or the death of this child, join together to demand of the queen the delivery home of their queen to govern her own realm, she also making the like request; and then the queen, having no just cause to detain her, be bound in honour to restore her unto her realm, and for matters that in this time shall pass, have her a mortal enemy for ever after. And thus, ceasing to trouble you any farther, I wish to you as to myself.

" Yours, most assured,

" T. Sussex.

" *From York, the XXII. October*, 1568."

SECRETARY CECIL'S DELIBERATION CONCERNING SCOTLAND, DECEMBER 21ST, 1568.

" The best way for England, but not the easiest, that the queen of Scots might remain deprived of her crown, and the state continue as it is.

"The second way for England profitable, and not so hard: — That the queen of Scots might be induced, by some persuasions, to agree that her son might continue king, because he is crowned, and herself to also remain queen; and that the government of the realm might be committed to such persons as the queen of England should name, so as, for the nomination of them, it might be ordered that a convenient number of persons of Scotland should be first named to the queen of England, indifferently for the queen of Scots and for her son; that is to say, the one half by the queen of Scots, and the other by the earl of Lennox and lady Lemon, parents to the child; and out of those, the queen's majesty of England to make choice for all the offices of the realm that are, by the laws of Scotland, disposable by the king or queen of the land.

"That until this may be done by the queen's majesty, the government remain in the hands of the earl of Murray, as it is, providing he shall not dispose of any offices or perpetuals to continue any longer than to these offered of the premises.

"That a parliament be summoned in Scotland by several commandments, both of the queen of Scots and of the young king.

"That hostages be delivered unto England, on the young king's behalf, to the number of twelve persons of the earl of Murray's party, as the queen of Scots shall name; and likewise on the queen's behalf, to the like number, as the earl of Murray shall name; the same not to be any that have, by inheritance or office, cause to be in this parliament, to remain from the beginning of the summons of that parliament until three months after that parliament; which hostages shall be pledges that the friends of either part shall keep the peace in all cases, till by this parliament it be concluded, that the ordinance which the queen of England shall devise for the government of the realm (being not to the hurt of the crown of Scotland, nor contrary to the laws of Scotland for any man's inheritance, as the same was before the parliament at Edinburgh, in December, 1567,) shall be established, to be kept and obeyed under pain of high treason for the breakers thereof.

"That by the same parliament also be established all execu-

tions and judgments given against any person to the death of the late king.

" That by the same parliament a remission be made universally from the queen of Scots to any her contraries, and also from every one subject to another, saving that restitution be made of lands and houses, and all other things heritable, that have been, by either side, taken from them which were the owners thereof at the committing of the queen of Scots to Lochleven.

" That by the same parliament it be declared who shall be successors to the crown next after the queen of Scots and her issue; or else that such right as the duke of Châtelherault had, at the marriage of the queen of Scots with the lord Darnley, may be conserved and not prejudiced.

" That the queen of Scots may have leave of the queen's majesty of England twelve months after the said parliament, and that she shall not depart out of England without special licence of the queen's majesty.

" That the young king shall be nourished and brought up in England, till he be years of age.

" It is to be considered that, in this case, the composition between the queen and her subjects may be made with certain articles, outwardly to be seen to the world, for her honour, as though all the parts should come of her, and yet, for the surety of contraries, that certain betwixt her and the queen's majesty are to be included."

LORD BURLEIGH'S ADVICES TO HIS SON, ROBERT CECIL.

" Son Robert,

" The virtuous inclinations of thy matchless mother, by whose tender and godly care thy infancy was governed, together with thy education under so zealous and excellent a tutor, puts me in rather assurance than hope that thou art not igno-

rant of that *summum bonum* which is only able to make thee happy as well in thy death as in thy life; I mean, the true knowledge and worship of thy Creator and Redeemer; without which all other things are vain and miserable. So that thy youth being guided by so sufficient a teacher, I make no doubt that he will furnish thy life with divine and moral documents. Yet, that I may not cast off the care besceming a parent towards his child, or that thou shouldest have cause to derive thy whole felicity and welfare rather from others than from whence thou receivedst thy breath and being, I think it fit and agreeable to the affection I bare thee, to help thee with such rules and advertisements for the squaring of thy life as are rather gained by experience than by much reading. To the end that, entering into this exorbitant age, thou mayest be the better prepared to shun those scandalous courses whereunto the world, and the lack of experience, may easily draw thee. And because I will not confound thy memory, I have reduced them into ten precepts; and, next unto Moses' Tables, if thou imprint them in thy mind, thou shalt reap the benefit, and I the content. And they are these following: —

I. When it shall please God to bring thee to man's estate, use great providence and circumspection in choosing thy wife; for from thence will spring all thy future good or evil. And it is an action of thy life like unto a stratagem of war, wherein a man can err but once. If thy estate be good, match near home and at leisure; if weak, far off and quickly. Enquire diligently of her disposition, and how her parents have been inclined in their youth. Let her not be poor, how generous * soever; for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility. Nor choose a base and uncomely creature altogether for wealth; for it will cause contempt in others and loathing in thee. Neither make choice of a dwarf or a fool; for by the one thou shalt beget a race of pigmies; the other will be thy continual disgrace; and it will yirke † thee to hear her talk. For thou shalt find it to thy great grief, that there is nothing more fulsome ‡ than a she-fool.

And touching the guiding of thy house, let thy hospitality

* *i. e.* Well-born. † *i. e.* Irk. ‡ *i. e.* Disgusting.

be moderate, and, according to the means of thy estate, rather plentiful than sparing, but not costly; for I never knew any man grow poor by keeping an orderly table. But some consume themselves through secret vices, and their hospitality bears the blame. But banish swinish drunkards out of thine house, which is a vice impairing health, consuming much, and makes no show. I never heard praise ascribed to the drunkard but the well-bearing his drink, which is a better commendation for a brewer's horse or a drayman than for either a gentleman or a serving-man. Beware thou spend not above three of four parts of thy revenues, nor above a third part of that in thy house; for the other two parts will do no more than defray thy extraordinaries, which always surmount the ordinary by much: otherwise thou shalt live, like a rich beggar, in continual want. And the needy man can never live happily nor contentedly; for every disaster makes him ready to mortgage or sell. And that gentleman who sells an acre of land sells an ounce of credit; for gentility is nothing else but ancient riches. So that, if the foundation shall at any time sink, the building must needs follow. — So much for the first precept.

II. Bring thy children up in learning and obedience, yet without outward austerity. Praise them openly, reprehend them secretly. Give them good countenance, and convenient maintenance, according to thy ability; otherwise thy life will seem their bondage, and what portion thou shalt leave them at thy death they will thank death for it, and not thee. And I am persuaded that the foolish cockering * of some parents, and the over-stern carriage of others, causeth more men and women to take ill courses than their own vicious inclinations. Marry thy daughters in time, lest they marry themselves. And suffer not thy sons to pass the Alps; for they shall learn nothing there but pride, blasphemy, and atheism.† And if by travel they get a few broken languages, that shall profit them nothing more than to have one meat served in divers dishes. Neither, by my consent, shalt thou train them up in wars: for he that sets up

* *i. e.* Over-indulgence.

† This strong caution against travelling seems like a presage of the future evils it was to produce to his own family. His grandson William, the second earl of Exeter, and his great-grandson lord Roos, were both, when at Rome, made proselytes to the popish religion.

his rest to live by that profession can hardly be an honest man or a good Christian. Besides, it is a science no longer in request than use. For soldiers in peace are like chimneys in summer.

III. Live not in the country without corn and cattle about thee: for he that putteth his hand to the purse for every expense of household, is like him that keepeth water in a sieve. And what provision thou shalt want, learn to buy it at the best hand: for there is one penny saved in four betwixt buying in thy need and when the markets and seasons serve fittest for it. Be not served with kinsmen, or friends, or men intreated to stay; for they expect much, and do little: nor with such as are amorous, for their heads are intoxicated. And keep rather two too few, than one too many. Feed them well, and pay them with the most; and then thou mayest boldly require service at their hands.

IV. Let thy kindred and allies be welcome to thy house and table. Grace them with thy countenance, and farther them in all honest actions; for, by this means, thou shalt so double the band of nature, as thou shalt find them so many advocates to plead an apology for thee behind thy back. But shake off those glow-worms, I mean parasites and sycophants, who will feed and fawn upon thee in the summer of prosperity; but, in an adverse storm, they will shelter thee no more than an arbour in winter.

V. Beware of suretyship for thy best friends. He that payeth another man's debt seeketh his own decay. But if thou canst not otherwise choose, rather lend thy money thyself upon good bonds, although thou borrow it. So shalt thou secure thyself, and pleasure thy friend. Neither borrow money of a neighbour or a friend, but of a stranger; where, paying for it, thou shalt hear no more of it. Otherwise thou shalt eclipse thy credit, lose thy freedom, and yet pay as dear as to another. But in borrowing of money be precious of thy word; for he that hath care of keeping days of payment is lord of another man's purse.

VI. Undertake no suit against a poor man with receiving * much wrong; for, besides that thou makest him thy compeer,

* *i. e.* Though you receive.

it is a base conquest to triumph where there is small resistance. Neither attempt law against any man before thou be fully resolved that thou hast right on thy side; and then spare not for either money or pains: for a cause or two so followed and obtained will free thee from suits a great part of thy life.

VII. Be sure to keep some great man thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles. Compliment him often with many, yet small gifts, and of little charge. And if thou hast cause to bestow any great gratuity, let it be something which may be daily in sight: otherwise, in this ambitious age, thou shalt remain like a hop without a pole; live in obscurity, and be made a foot-ball for every insulting companion to spurn at.

VIII. Towards thy superiors be humble, yet generous.* With thine equals familiar, yet respective. Towards thine inferiors show much humanity, and some familiarity: as to bow the body, stretch forth the hand, and to uncover the head; with such like popular compliments. The first prepares thy way to advancement,—the second makes thee known for a man well bred,—the third gains a good report; which, once got, is easily kept. For right humanity takes such deep root in the minds of the multitude, as they are more easily gained by unprofitable curtesies than by churlish benefits. Yet I advise thee not to affect, or neglect, popularity too much. Seek not to be Essex: shun to be Raleigh.†

IX. Trust not any man with thy life, credit, or estate. For it is mere folly for a man to enthral himself to his friend, as though, occasion being offered, he should not dare to become an enemy.

X. Be not scurrilous in conversation, nor satirical in thy jests. The one will make thee unwelcome to all company; the other pull on quarrels, and get the hatred of thy best friends. For suspicious jests, when any of them savour of truth, leave a bitterness in the minds of those which are touched. And, albeit I have already pointed at this inclusively, yet I think it necessary to leave it to thee as a special caution; because I have seen

* *i. e.* Not mean.

† Essex was the idol of the people; his rival, Raleigh, their aversion, till his undeserved misfortunes attracted their compassion, and his heroism their applause.

many so prone to quip and gird *, as they would rather lose their friend than their jest. And if perchance their boiling brain yield a quaint scoff, they will travel to be delivered of it as a woman with child. These nimble fancies are but the froth of wit."

* Mock and jibe.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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